

# STARBURST

**WIN A STARBURST  
SWEAT-SHIRT**

COMPETITION DETAILS INSIDE

**THE NEW FLASH GORDON**

FULL REVIEW PLUS COLOUR PHOTOS

**JOANNA LUMLEY**

INTERVIEW WITH TV'S SAPPHIRE

**PAUL DARROW**

BLAKE'S 7'S AVON SPEAKS OUT

**PLUS**

**DRESSED TO KILL,**

**CLOSE ENCOUNTERS,**

**ARTHUR C. CLARKE,**

**THE FILMS OF WILLIS  
O'BRIEN**

**AND DE PALMA'S CARRIE**





## PAUL DARROW INTERVIEW

STARBURST TALKS TO PAUL DARROW, WHO PORTRAYS THE EVER-POPULAR AVON OF BLAKE'S 7. SEE PAGE 30.



## FLASH GORDON

NOT ONE BUT TWO REVIEWS OF THE LATEST OFFERING FROM DINO DE LAURENTIIS — THE SF EPIC, FLASH GORDON. SEE PAGE 23.

Editor: Alan McKenzie  
Art Editor: Steve O'Leary  
Art Assistance: Ches Farnsworth  
Editorial Assistance: Gilly Finner  
Production: Nigel Bullock  
Advertising: Top Team Ltd  
Distribution: Corgi

# STARBURST

Writers this issue:  
John Brosnan  
Tony Crawley  
Phil Edwards  
Alan Jones  
Nicholas Leahy  
Tim Vahimagi

Publisher: Stan Lee

Volume 3, Number 4

## STARBURST LETTERS 4 GALAXINA 16

OUR READERS WRITE ON TISE VAHIMAGI'S TV ZONE AND JUST ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE THAT CATCHES THEIR FANCY!

## THINGS TO COME 6

OUR REGULAR, MONTHLY ROUND-UP OF NEWS FROM THE WORLDS OF FILM AND TELEVISION FANTASY.

## SWEAT-SHIRT COMPETITION 11

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF FIFTY STARBURST SWEAT SHIRTS IN OUR GREAT EASY-TO-ENTER COMPETITION.

## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: THE SPECIAL EDITION 12



STEPHEN SPIELBERG'S REVISED EDITION OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS IS FINALLY WITH US. JOHN BROSINAN ASKS "WAS IT WORTH THE TROUBLE?"

## DRESSED TO KILL 14



A REVIEW OF THE LATEST SHOCKER FROM THE MASTER OF CINEMA SUSPENSE, BRIAN DE PALMA.



PLAYBOY PLAYMATE DOROTHY STRATTEN DIED IN TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES EARLIER THIS YEAR. TONY CRAWLEY LOOKS AT THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE TABLOID HEADLINES AND AT HER LAST FILM, THE SPACE SPOOF, GALAXINA.

## JOANNA LUMLEY 18



STARBURST TALKS TO THE STAR OF THE TIME-SHIFTING TV SERIES SAPPHIRE AND STEEL.

## FLASH GORDON 23



NOT ONE BUT TWO REVIEWS OF THE MUCH PUBLICISED DINO DE LAURENTIIS MOVIE OF THIS 1930s CLIFFHANGER/COMIC STRIP.

## PAUL DARROW 30

JOHN FLEMING INTERVIEWS THE STAR OF THE PHENOMENALLY POPULAR BBC TV SERIES, BLAKE'S 7.

## STARBURST HORROR CLASSIC 36

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT ONE OF DIRECTOR BRIAN DE PALMA'S GREATEST SUCCESSES, CARRIE.

## ARTHUR C. CLARKE 38



STARBURST TALKS TO SF WRITER EXTRAORDINAIRE ARTHUR C. CLARKE ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.

## IT'S ONLY A MOVIE! 44

JOHN BROSINAN COVERS DEATH SHIP, HARLEQUIN AND PROM NIGHT IN HIS MONTHLY LOOK AT CINEMA FANTASY.

## TV ZONE 46

TISE VAHIMAGI TALKS ABOUT THE MANY FAN MOVEMENTS WHICH HAVE ARISEN FROM FANTASY TV SHOWS THROUGH THE YEARS.

## BOOK WORLD 48

THIS MONTH WE REVIEW THE NEW STEPHEN KING NOVEL, FIRESTARTER, AND AN ANTHOLOGY ENTITLED DARK FORCES.

## WILLIS O'BRIEN: KONGMAKER 51



A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT THE LONG AND INNOVATIVE CAREER OF WILLIS O'BRIEN, CREATOR OF KING KONG.

# STARBURST LETTERS

## FANTASIA

Thank you for the recent issue of *Starburst* which I have just read. However, I have one minor quibble about a point of translation. The music used in the final scene of Disney's *Fantasia* was incorrectly named for a 'British' magazine. Despite the title *Night on Bald Mountain* used in the advertising poster, the correct title of the piece is *Night on the Bare Mountain*. Indeed, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the Eulenburg Miniature Score (number 841) would verify this. I hope you don't mind me just pointing out this purely 'local' matter of linguistics.

I look forward to seeing the next issue, and continued success with the magazine.

Antony D. Ellis,  
Halifax,  
West Yorks.

## UFO CLUBS

Having been a keen UFO enthusiast all my life, I would extract much enjoyment out of actually playing an active part in UFO investigation.

I am writing this letter in the hope that an address or telephone number could be forwarded connecting me with a national UFO organisation or society.

If in the event of you being unable to reply directly, I would be grateful if this letter could be passed on to a society or organisation dealing in this field.

Concluding, *Starburst* is great and good value for money.

Richard B. Wells,  
Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire.

You could try writing to Janet Cross, Richard. And you'll find her at the UFO Network, 2 St Ivian Court, Colneyhatch Lane, London N10. (Now don't say we never do anything for you, Janet!)

## TV ON TV!

What happened to Moonbase 3, The Twilight Zone,

Orson Welles' Great Mysteries, Out of This World, The Avengers and, to an extent, The Outer Limits (relegated to the middle of the night when no one but the most avid sf fan bothers to watch - a great pity). All of these series, anthologies, call them what you will, have been buried. It seems very likely that none of these series will ever be shown again at a sensible hour of the day.

I agree completely with Tise Vehimegi (*Starburst* 26) on what he has written about Journey to the Unknown (I prefer to call it by its other title, Out of the Unknown). I enjoyed the series so much, from the opening titles on the rollercoaster in the blacked-out foreground, that I even went to the extent of recording the theme music which I found terribly eerie.

Tise mentions the episode *Matakitas is Coming*. When I first saw this it truly frightened me and towards the end the action moved so quickly with images and information being thrown at you from left and right, that it was almost disorientating.

Out of the Unknown, for me, was and still is one of the most entertaining anthologies I have ever seen and reminds me entirely of the American TV version *Twist in the Tale*.

I wish the BBC or ITV would get around to repeating some of these classic programmes. Out of the Unknown was in colour and, possibly, the series may be repeated one day. But, as for The Twilight Zone, The Avengers, Out of This World etc, because they were made in black and white people get the wrong impression. Black and white gives the feeling of age and lack of quality but, no classic ever gets old.

Aldo Rabaiotti,  
Port Talbot,  
S. Wales.

I have just read, with considerable interest your *TV Zone* column as featured in issue 25 of *Starburst* magazine.

Like yourself, I for the past several years have been

researching into filmed television material from about 1947 to perhaps, 1968.

I was informed, a few weeks ago, by the film buyer for the local I.T.V. station (A.T.V.) that they had acquired the rights to the early colour episodes of The Cisco Kid western series (1950-55), but these could not be transmitted until better prints were provided from the distributor. Thus proving, it isn't always easy to show vintage material.

A.T.V. transmitted thirteen *Twilight Zone* episodes during the spring of '75. In 1976, colour re-shoots of The Lone Ranger and Time-Tunnel, as well as an anthology series under the title: *Play-It-Again* which included: *Maverick*, *Dr Kildare*, etc.

The very best of luck with your project.

A.G. Keeling,  
Warley,  
W. Midlands.

P.S. My personal favourite, that I would like to see revived, is The Buccaneers (1956).

Your letter brought back some fond memories for the *Starburst* staff. Why, at the very mention of The Buccaneers, editor Alan McKenzie burst into a tuneless rendition of "Let's go a-rov-ing, a-rov-ing across the oceans, Oh Let's go a-rov-ing and join the Buccaneers." How many of you can join in the next verse?

Before I start, I would like to say that I am delighted that your magazine is now running a regular *TV column* - something that is sorely lacking in a great many other film magazines (both sf and general). I am equally delighted that you have Tise Vehimegi to write it. Mr Vehimegi's book, *The American Vein*, is the most informative, interesting and refreshing work on television to have emerged during the current (and welcome) rash of them (I share Tony Crawley's apparent disappointment and disgust with Helliwell's slung-together *TV Guide* - it remains a vaguely useful reference tool, but there are far too many omissions and discrepancies to be

taken totally seriously).

Columns as opinionated and downright prejudiced as *TV Zone* are always a joy to read and the fact that they are often utterly infuriating is a large part of their appeal. (It's this irreverently opinionated tone that your regular contributors like Brosnan and Crawley achieve that makes your magazine the most entertaining and interesting of the sf mags currently on the market; a fact that many correspondents seem not to have recognised judging by the recent partisan assaults on poor Mr Brosnan).

Having said that, my main reason for writing is to defend Buck Rogers in the 25th Century from Mr Vehimegi's salvo in your latest issue. Okay, so Buck may not be inventive. It may not be a whole new concept in tele-fantasy. (Whole new concepts in tele-anything are a rare occurrence these days). But it's fun. Personally I have absolutely nothing against watching "lusty-looking girls with sprayed-on outfits". And I'd rather spend fifty minutes watching a lightweight, fun sf show done reasonably well with occasionally amusing scripts, pleasingly relaxed performances and acceptable special effects than spend around six hours watching a supposedly intelligent piece of sf slowly sink from sight in a welter of stilted acting, lousy cut-rate effects and pretentious Pseudo-Seriousness like The Martian Chronicles (although a goodly part of the second episode raised my hopes, albeit falsely). Gil Gerald is an amiable hero, Erin Gray looks great, can be tough without being butch and delivers her lines with a modicum of intelligence - personally I think she's the best lady to hit tele-fantasy since Diane Rigg. And any series that features Jamie Lee Curtis as guest star really can't be all bad. (Not to mention the sly joke of featuring Buster Crabbe as "Gordon" in the opening episode). So, whilst Mr Vehimegi sits down to yawn in Dr Who, I'll settle back and thoroughly enjoy Buck Rogers thank you very much (Are the programme



# STARBURST LETTERS

planners really trying to do themselves out of a job by driving us all out to buy video recorders so we can arrange our own schedules? SF on the box is rare enough without having to face this choice every Saturday teatime. But then whilst most of us can only drool over VCRs in the shops I suppose the planners' jobs are quite safe and they can continue to arrange annoying and frustrating clashes like this!

Anyway, keep up the infuriating work Mr Vahimagi. I hope your column runs for years.

Incidentally, *The American Vein* revealed that Vahimagi has a wealth of lost and forgotten information about tv shows of yore at his fingertips — so how about attempting some more episode guides. Not the current shows or the old regulars like *Twilight Zone* or *The Invaders* — but the shows which are fondly remembered but are never taken really seriously as fantasy like *The Man from UNCLE* or even *The Avengers*. (Personally, I still dream that Marvel will have a brainstorm and produce a one-off about old western or cop shows — and at last we'll get a full episode guide of — gasp — *Maverick* or *77 Sunset Strip*. Well, I can dream, huh?)

And while we're at it — let's try for a *Bring Back the Twilight Zone* campaign. (I never saw it first time round — and to be honest I don't even know which channel showed it — so which one should I write to?)

Thanks for listening and I wish you continued luck with your fine magazine (issue 27, ah? You must be doing something right!).

Mike Young,  
Etal Park,

Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Buying *Starburst* each month has become a pleasant habit which I hope I won't have to break within the foreseeable future because I generally find at least one article worth reading. *Starburst* 26 was no exception. In fact it's probably the most well balanced issue you've put together to date. There is certainly a lot which I'd like to comment upon. So without more ado...

I was interested (and deligh-

ted) to see that you've taken an in-depth look at what is probably the greatest imaginative film ever made — *Fantasia*, particularly as it was irresistibly reminded of certain sequences in this while watching *The Empire Strikes Back*; the similarity in pace and animation between Disney's dinosaurs keeling over in their death throes, and the destruction of the walkers in *Empire* is particularly marked, as is the art deco styling used for both *Fantasia*'s Pastoral section and *Empire*'s Cloud City (a style considered futuristic enough in its time to have served the comic strip heroes of the 40's and 50's although perhaps a little dated for today's film fan). Which brings me to Alan Murdoch's article on comic strip conversions for the screen. It's a pity that he wasn't given more space for a detailed analysis. The article was little more than a list of names without any attempt at critical assessment. I appreciate that space is limited but perhaps a series spread over two or three issues would have been more valuable. My own feeling is that the only really successful adaptations are those which reflect the style of comic strip art, the sort of thing which the production team of tv's *Batman* achieved with tilted camera shots, freeze frame, and captions, and which *Barbarella* achieved with extravagant sets and costumes; although the Monica Vitti *Modesty Blaise* film attempted to combine both techniques and succeeded only in looking ludicrous and being thoroughly confusing. Incidentally, I'm surprised that British listeners have not yet had the opportunity of hearing the BBC World Service series of *Modesty Blaise* yet.

To return to your letters column, I agree with Sue Turner that *Survivors* was superior adult science fiction, but it's certainly not the only one of its type, or the best. Unfortunately British tv companies seem to regard science fiction programmes as children's programmes almost by definition and are reluctant to label anything broadcast after 9.00 pm as sf. *Quatermass* (the BBC production) was described as a 'thriller' and broadcast at a time generally

reserved for detective plays. Dr Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis coined the term 'science-fact' to describe *Doomwatch* and to dissociate it from the spacebush and ray guns sf of *Star Trek* (in fact *Doomwatch* was far closer to the spirit of the science fiction literature of its day than any other programme or film but its publicity was such that I doubt if many of its audience realised that they were watching an sf series). ITV's *Thriller* series was in fact closer in spirit to the current *Hammer House of Horror* series than to the detective style programmes to which the term thriller was originally applied, while *The Prisoner* defied definition. Today, with the success of the science fiction genre in both the cinema and television the tv companies are no longer terrified of the sf label, on the contrary, there seems to be a danger that the term may become over used.

I seem to have strayed into Tise Vahimagi territory here. I appreciate the thoughts behind his *TV Zone* column but he does exhibit a touching naivety in the face of the facts of copyright law, programme planning and Equity agreements. With the exception of such imported programmes as *Star Trek* and *Outer Limits* the restrictions on British made productions are ludicrously limiting and generally lead to the ridiculous situation whereby the summer schedules are virtually a repeat of the previous autumn's programming. Unless there is a drastic change in the structure of broadcasting law (and with the increasing popularity of the video tape machines such a change seems more than likely) the future will consist of endless repeats of US shows which seem to get steadily worse as the budgets get steadily larger.

Having said that I do feel that in spite of Vahimagi's contemptuous put-down *Space Academy* (which is so badly publicised that even London Weekend Television's announcers seem to think that this live action (just) programme is a cartoon series) is one of the few sf shows worth watching. Its obviously low budget, hackneyed plots and unbelievably clean-cut characters and ethics remind me of the early

days of *Lost in Space* and is a refreshing change from the super-psychodelic multi-million dollar affects and tongue in cheek, gee-thi-sci-fi-is-such-fun attitude of *Buck Rogers* or *Battlestar Galactica*. I'm not saying that *Space Academy* is good, just that it compares favourably with its rivals. And for those who think that the acting in *Space 1999* and *UFD* is wooden, there are times during *Buck Rogers* when I've been convinced that I've been watching *Thunderbirds* — and not the space craft shots either!

Finally a plea for more comprehensive coverage of the work which goes into creating believable futures for the cinema, specifically the work of the set designers, costume designers and make-up artists whose contribution is as important, if not more so, as that of the special effects designers. I did hope that the centre-spread on the *Empire* costumes would herald an article on the work and problems involved in making these — but no, it's back to those interminable features on effects and model-making which are covered in just as much detail in your rival publications (to be fair I did think that Mat Irvine's series on the subject was one of the best layman's guides I've ever read on the subject). *Starburst* has been very good, it could be infinitely better in future!

Jean Axford,  
Shedrow,  
London.

Send all comments to:  
**Starburst Letters,**  
**Marvel Comics,**  
**Jadwin House,**  
**205-211 Kentish Town Road,**  
**London NW5,**  
**United Kingdom.**

Published monthly by Marvel Comics Ltd., Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5. All photographic material is copyright of BBC, NBC, ABC, CBS, ITC, IBA, Columbia, Scotti American, New Radin, Rank, Twentieth Century-Fox, United Artists, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Oppidan, Walt Disney Productions, Toei Studios, CIG, EMI, MGM, MCA-Universal (unless otherwise stated) and appears with their kind permission. All remaining content is copyright of Marvel Comics Ltd., 1980. *Starburst* is a trademark and trademark of Marvel Comics Ltd. All rights reserved. All advertising to Top Team Ltd., 97 Fleet Street, London EC4, 01-263 4991. Printed in the United Kingdom.

# THINGS TO COME

## SPIELBERG'S UFOs

Steven Spielberg is having another bash at UFOs. And I don't mean an Extra Special Edition of *Close Encounters*: I do believe he's finally got that movie out of his system and in the shape he always wanted. No, I'm referring to a new Spielberg venture in his producer's hat, *Night Skies*. It has the makings of yet another highly expensive Spielbergian budget, but with rather more success-potential than his producing Zemeckis-Gale ventures. First off, he's got himself a rather better team together. Ron Cobb will direct from a John Sayles scenario.



Director Stephen Spielberg.

Now, Ron Cobb, you will have heard of before. He's the cartoonist with the *Los Angeles Free Press* who was part of the *Alien* design team. He has also lately completed his designs for the much-delayed movie of *Conan The Barbarian*. John Sayles, however, is a new name to these pages, but one, according to several American critics, to keep an eye on. "A remarkable talent," comments *Time Magazine* critic Richard Corliss.

Sayles is not 30 yet and has already won awards for his first film (a short with the oddly telephonic and Lucasian title of 1-80 Nebraska M.490-M.205) and his first novel, *Union Dues*. Yet another pupil of Roger Corman, he wrote a couple of little Cormanian exploitationers, *Piranha* and *The Lady In Red*, before scripting jolly Roger's most expensive film to date and his long-awaited return to science fiction — *Battle Beyond the Stars*. John Sayles then took his Corman earnings and financed his own first feature, *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, with 60,000 dollars which is absolutely nothing in Hollywood terms where the average budget is about 8.5 million dollars. He saved money by doing almost everything himself on the film — writing, producing, directing, editing it and playing one of the seven characters — all flowers of the 60s, ten years on.

His script for Spielberg is officially described in that quaint Hollywoodese as "a non-hardware UFO story". In other words, more about UFO spotters than UFOs themselves. The story obviously attracted someone like Spielberg who has never forgotten how he missed one of his boy scouts' troop camping trips during which his pals saw a red UFO thingie whizzing through the heavens. He's been looking for it ever since...

Sayles, himself, says he will be unavailable for any re-writes on what he considers a full scenario. When *Night Skies* goes into production come the end of 1981 (after Spielberg has finished his two films for George Lucas), Sayles will be otherwise engaged, directing his own *Blood of the Lamb* for the Ladd Company (headed by Alan Ladd Jr., the man who gave Lucas the initial go-ahead with *Star Wars* when production chief of 20th Century-Fox), plus a 60s-set movie for Fox itself. Both of these projects will see a formidable rise in his own budget-scales, from 60,000 to 4.5 million dollars or so. He's also hoping to shoot another of his more personal studies, *Linea*, which he first penned in 1977. Seems those Stateside critics may have a point. Sayles is obviously someone to watch.

## CORMAN TALKS

Meanwhile, Sayles' old mentor, Roger Corman, has been releasing fresh information on his new schedule of three science fiction movies. *Nightfall*, the Isaac Asimov tale that Julie Corman will produce for Roger's New World, will cost up to 7-million dollars of probably German money in the main. For the same kind of budget, Corman will be producing *Journey Beyond This Galaxy*, while *Planet of Horrors* will come a smidgen cheaper at 5-million. And for the moment, he has axed any production plans for his old script of *Millennium* and his other pet tale, *The Last World War*... though if *Battle Beyond the Stars* keeps making as much loot as it started to do, Roger may find



*Battle Beyond the Stars*.

he has more money to spend and he could reactivate them.

His other 1981 projects include the Paris-set *Quartet* starring Alan Bates and a good old fashioned touch of sheer Cormanie, *Don't Open The Door*. That, by the way, is a new title for a script Roger had initially called... *Friday the 13th*. Not often you find Roger Corman pipped at the post.

## THONGOR LIVES

Milton Subotsky, as intimated by Phil Edwards in his great background-history article (*Starburst* 26), has *not* given up on *Thongor*. The movie lives... But when *Thongor* goes into the valley of the demons next year, it'll be in 70mm animation form.

## TOEI RULES, OK



The shock news that yet another of the good ship Yamato animation fantasies is outpacing *The Empire Strikes Back* in Tokyo, is final proof of the enormous power of Japanese animation. Although what scanty evidence we've had here of their shows was laughed off the screens, they're heap big business in the land of the rising Detsun... and increasingly beyond. *Goldderak*, for example, is now a household name for most Euro-families. France, Italy, and Germany are big buyers of the Japanese tv comic strips — America is the next target. (I think they've given up on Britain).

Yamato Towa Ni, which translates toughly and indeed most aptly as *Be Forever*, Yamato (third of the series) opened in Tokyo five weeks after *Empire*, and immediately hit the No 1 box-office spot. Not that surprising, perhaps. Much the same happened last year when another Toei cartoon space movie, *Galaxy Express*, became the top home-made movie of the year, earning upwards of 8-million dollars, coming fourth in the box-office charts behind *Superman*, *Death on the Nile* and *Grease*.

MORE NEWS OF FANTASY PROJECTS FROM  
AROUND THE WORLD COURTESY OF  
REGULAR **STARBURST** REPORTER,  
GLOBETROTTER EXTRAORDINAIRE, TONY CRAWLEY.

Such film winners, though, are small potatoes compared with the television output — and sales. Animation strips fill the kiddie hours of 5-7pm on all five Japanese channels. These half-hour shows cost about 40,000 dollars to make. In a full year therefore, no less than 250 million dollars is spent on tele-animation a year. (A further 50 million dollars goes on cartoon features for the cinemas, which thank heaven, are not all re-edited telly-series anymore, but original features).

Top of the animators' heap, of course, is the mammoth Toei combine. We've often examined their work in *Starburst* before, as well as their complaints that no British tv network seems interested in their work (or, more likely, can afford it). Toei has its own special studio complex and a 350 work-force — producing up to six half-hour tv shows a week, plus their hot movies.

Overseas and home sales bring in 500-million dollars in revenue, and if the Japs follow their success with cars and break into the huge American market (and they reckon they will — "give us five years") this figure will rapidly top the billion mark. Toei, in fact, has already a toei in the American door, with their co-production deal with Marvel Comics to make a 90-minute cartoon of *Swan Lake*. They're after much bigger things, though, and have been talking turkey about similar co-production pacts to produce *Spider-Man*, *The Incredible Hulk* and *Captain America*. The idea, says Toei's Osamu Fukunaka, would be to bring all the designs, story-boards, music, everything from Hollywood to Tokyo — where the animation work would be filmed. And Toei is putting its money where its mouth and artists' pens are — all 35-million dollars of it.

As well as Marvel, Toei has a new deal with Disney. So far, it's for exclusive re-issues of Disney cartoon classics only (Toei owns 134 cinemas in Japan). Distributing Disney could be but one step to the company working with or for Disney on future animation projects, make no mistake of that.

*Star Wars*, of course, is behind the current boom of space operas from the Nipponese studios — from *Goldorak* to *Osamu Tezuka's Space Fire* for the Toho-Towa company... and their latest film hit, *Draemon*, about a cat with super-powers, if you please. But the root cause goes further than simply being turned on by Lucas. "We have developed technique to an extraordinary level," says Motoyuko Kubotani of Shochiku Films, "and we have applied it to achieve pace and action that cannot be created in live-action pictures. Japan has been a leader in science-fiction and science-fantasy and these elements are naturally absorbed by our animators. Almost anything imaginable in characters, expression and gadgetry becomes part of our animation output."

Including, of course, vast profits.

## SCOTT FREE

EMI have lost Ridley Scott by taking so long to get *Knight of the Ground*. The *Alien* director is now too busy with his new Hollywood career — including *Dune* for Dino De Laurentiis — to make his tale of knights, ancient and bold. Walter Hill, director of the *Carradine* and *Keesh* brothers in *The Long Riders*, will take over the reins. As well as the helmer, the title has been switched. *Knight* is now *The Sword*.

## TORONTO TERROR

The — er — stapfather of *Rosemary's Baby*, John Cassavetes, is returning to fantasy bumps in the night in Toronto. He's starring in a 5,100,000 dollar chiller called *Incubus*, written by Sender Stern and directed by our very own John Rought. Cassavetes, no doubt, is making the terror-trip for the bucks in order to help finance his next outing as a director. His last one, *Gloria*, starring his wife, Gena Rowlands, has just shared the top prize at the Venice festival.

## DR LOGAN

Gregory Harrison, the tv *Logan*, is having rather better fortune with his latest series in America. He's the self-assured Vietnam veteran Dr "Gonzo" Gates, sidekick to Parnell Roberts in, and as, *Trepper* John, MD, which is a kind of

son-of-M\*A\*S\*H. *Trapper* John was the character played by Wayne Rogers opposite Alan Alda in the Korean war comedy, and this new series looks at the happy-go-lucky *Trapper* 26 years later, heading up an emergency unit at a San Francisco hospital. Greg Harrison's character is, perhaps, closer to the M\*A\*S\*H irreverency, being just back from his own medical service in Nam. "He's a lot like me," says Greg. "Just as unimpressed with authority as I am, but he's half again as witty in the way he deals with it. But then he has writers. I'm usually thinking of what I should've said in real life... long after the fact." Greg knows his role inside out. Although a conscientious objector, he did his two years US Army service in Germany — as a medic attached to a chopper unit. (What's that? Yes, the bearded, bald-pated Parnell Roberts is the former Adam Cartwright of *Bonanza*. Pa Lorne Greene has aged better).

## SCANNERS SCAM

First word on David Cronenberg's newest of item from Canada, *Scanners*, comes from Bob Rehme, head honcho of Avco Embassy — a company suddenly heavily devoted to fantasy-shock numbers. Rehme flew into Toronto to view a rough-cut of the film — due out early next year — and was, in a word, ecstatic. "The picture is simply fantastic," says he. "*Scanners* is bound to become one of the most talked about science fiction films ever made. David

## REMAKE DEPT



There's also been a change of director of the long-announced re-make of the late Val Lewton's 1942 winner, *Cat People*. The old RKO property is among several due for the re-tread process by producer Wilbur Stark at Universal. Originally, the new director was to have been the French eroticist, Roger Vadim — not so outlandish a choice as you may think. Vadim is an ex nut and only wishes someone would back him with enough loot and the right script to prove it. Now, however, Vadim is out and the new man is, certainly, a surprise. It's Paul Schrader, the writer of various Martin Scorsese-Robert De Niro films (*Taxi Driver*, *The Raging Bull*), and the helmer of *Blue Collar*, *The Hardcore Life*, and indeed producer of several other projects. With *Cat People*, Schrader (who has been teaching cinema since completing *American Gigolo*) will be directing somebody else's script for the first time. Alan Ormsby is responsible for the up-dated scenario, or so it says here. I'm sure Schrader will be adding some of his usual Calvinist doom to it, though.

One of Wilbur Stark's other RKO re-makes will be Howard Hawks' *The Thing* (*From Another World*). John Carpenter directs that one, as I've reported already and will be going into at more length in the future with *New Year's* interview with the young master...



# THINGS TO COME

Cronenberg is a master of the art and has crafted an exciting, futuristic and controversial film." His stars, by the way, include sweet faced Jennifer O'Neill and ex-Prisoner, Patrick McGeehan. No wonder Avco's Bob Rehme is tickled pink. As well as the new Cronenberg, he has John Carpenter's new film, *Escape from New York*, on his books, plus Jamie Lee Curtis' *Prom Night*. And there's every likelihood that Avco will also pick up another shocker from Cronenberg's backers, *Filmpian* — William Shatner and Lee Grant in J.C. Lord's *The Fright*. The J.C., incidentally, stands for Jean-Claude, but obviously *Filmpian* don't want us to think this is a French movie...

## GREAT SCOTTS

After their forays into the dark, old house numbers — together in *The Changeling*; she, by herself in *The Hearse* — George C. Scott and his missus, Trish Van Devere, have returned to the American stage. Akin to a certain Mr O'Toole, they did not, however, choose their new vehicle too wisely. I doubt if any film will ever stem from Sidney Michael's *Tricks of the Trade*, something of a telly romantic thriller really, with George as a CIA agent, with the cover of a shrink, and Trish lying on his couch, alongside far too many red herrings.



Actress Trish Van Devere.

## BIG STARKY?

Paul Michael Glaser, the erstwhile *Starsky* of the tv cop beat, was one of the big sensations of the Venice film festival, mobbed wherever he ambled. Not so hot with the critics, though. Even though his Canadian antry, *Phobia*, was directed by the immortal John Huston, Glaser got the thumbs-down for his overly smooth acting in a very routine thriller. Indeed, some say he was to be found acting rather better in Venice when complaining his luggage failed to turn up off his Pan Am flight from New York.

## SUPER-CHRIS!



Christopher Reeve's big gamble seems to have come off. Choosing his first film out of his Suple combinations was not easy. He settled, as we all know, for the Richard Matheson story *Bid Time Return* — directed by the Jaws I man, Jeannot Szwarc as *Somewhere in Time*. And thus far, the critical reaction from American scribes is exceedingly good. The time-tripping love story is, yes, old-fashioned, but apparently works impeccably. The *Variety* critic adds, "If anyone had any doubt after *Superman* that Reeve is a fine actor and with both star power and versatility, this film should firmly establish his credentials. As a first rate and exciting romantic lead, able to handle both comedy and drama with equal skill, Reeve has a terrific screen career in the making." Good on him. His romantic interest, of course, is another old (well, young) fantasy hand, Jane Seymour from the worlds of *Bond* and *Harryhausen*. Keep your eyes open in the film — Richard Matheson pops up, himself. He's billed in the cast as: *Astonished Man*.

Chris is making up for lost time in promoting the film. He could not attend Universal's "romantic weekend" hoopla staged at the film's main setting, the Grand Hotel on Michigan's Mackinac Island — because the actors' strike forbade actors taking part in such publicity bashes.

producer Robert Klane further copied the *Love At First Bite* notion of having our friendly, neighbourhood blood-suckers trying to adapt to the American way of life. Tapid stuff. Not a patch on the wit of *The Adams Family* or even the dear old *Munsters*, come to that.

## WISE MOVES

Unlike Chris Reeve, Robert Wise hasn't found a new feature yet, after *Star Trek*. Instead, he's working on a series of education films for movie students, made with the Directors Guild of America. Similar to the Guild's eight-party history, *The Men Who Made the Movies*, Wise's bunch looks at the work of the director in films. His first short is *The Directors and the Actors*, and he's now shooting *The Director and Visual Imagery*. Could be an interesting pick-up for the Beeb there...

## TELLY PAP

Well, they've shown the pilot film on ABC-tv in the States — and that took some nerve. But whether Mr and Mrs Dracula will ever reach full series format remains rather doubtful — that would take some nerve. One good aspect of the actors' strike, according to certain tv executives, is that extra work was carried out on scripts when shooting halted, and so by the time the actors went back to work, scenarios were in better shape, not as hurried as usual. Well, they'd had to work a year or more to straighten out Mr and Mrs D's unctious Dick Shawn (you love him or hate him; I think I've made my position clear) as Dracula, with Carol Lawrence as his wife in this weak idea of having the Dracules moving (like George Hamilton) from the old Transylvanian homestead to America — to the South Bronx, in fact. Writer-

## TELLY HIT

Rather better tv-fare is the NBC movie, *The Henderson Monster*, a kind of updated *Frankenstein* cum *Jekyll and Hyde* tale which has Jason Miller (from *The Exorcist*) debbing in DNA studies. Christine Lahti, (from *And Justice For All*) was his assistant and Stephen Collins (from *Star Trek*) was her husband. The monster was the bio-chemist himself and what he could do to, rather than for the world. Waris Hussein directed; not an absolute winner... unless you see it on the same night as Mr and Mrs Dracula, that is.

## BY GEORGE!

What can only be described as the George Romero influence is playing havoc with America's voluntary film censorship ratings. Horror films/shocker trips/creepy ghouls/gothic fantasies (call 'em what you will) are beginning to get so thoroughly nasty, they're being awarded X labels by the Motion Picture Association of America's Classification and Ratings Administration. An American X is much stronger than ours, and usually denotes not merely sex-oriented movies, but hard-core



# THINGS TO COME



Christopher Reeve (left) and Jane Seymour (above) star together in *Somewhere in Time*.

picture contains scenes of a violent nature, no one under 17 will be admitted unless accompanied by an adult." (And in view of the film, that shouldn't be a mother!). Even Fred Schepisi's fine Australian drama, *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (more historical than horror-style hysterical) was released sans rating — "due to the nature of this film, under 17 requires accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian. There will be strict adherence to this policy."

Such warnings make the films sound more like self-rated Rs than an MPAA official X — and if every film company rated its own films, the paying public would be in a pretty pickle. In Britain, some companies pray for an X to boost trade, others fight, if necessary cut scenes, to get an AA, to grab the youth market. If left to rate themselves, every film would be over-hyped and the public would be invariably cheated by an X sounding like an AA or vice-versa. Although against censorship at any level, in any media, it's obviously important that there is some kind of official, and non-partisan guidance rating system, to protect children rather than to boost profits.

Some American distributors are thinking like their British cousins — and asking for a two-tier X rating. X for horror, say, and XX for porno, or X for sex in Britain and H for horror, or maybe V for heavy violence. The Americans

terrifying than showing bottles of ketchup dripping all over everyone. As the sex-film makers used to say in their own defence, the true pornography in life is not sex — where would we be without it? — but violence... without that we might be around for a little longer.

## KING MOVIES

Straight after the news that producer Milton Subotsky has now become connected with the plans to film two Stephen King teles, comes news of *The King's* latest short story. Called *The Monkey*, it first appeared in a special 32-page pull-out paperback within *Gallery* magazine in America in November. The mag has a long association with premiering King. *Gallery* ran *The Creep Show* in last year's July issue. George Romero directs that show late next year. Milton Subotsky will produce *Night Night and Terror By Daylight*. And it won't be long, I'm sure, before we hear who's due to buy *The Monkey*...

## JL & PJ ON TV

John Carpenter's *Halloween* is now available on video-cassette. Or it is in America via the Media Home Entertainment combine in Los Angeles. T'will be coming our way soon enough. Just check the listings of your favourite video outlet. You can't miss it. It's being hyped as "the most successful independent motion picture of all time." I'm thinking of buying a copy for our highly esteemed Editor to help him tell the difference between Jamie Lee Curtis and P.J. Soles. (P.J. incidentally, has just joined the cast of something called *Jambalaya*. And I do mean P.J. and not J.L. OK, AM?) Media Home Entertainment also have Bill Osco's *Flesh Gordon* on their books, plus those Ken Shapiro-Chevy Chase tele-ends-ups, *The Groove Tube* and *Tunnelvision*. Sounds a bright outfit.

## FANTASY CHART

I'm still getting mail from readers about the *Starburst Top Fantasy Film Chart* (*Starburst* 21), the rights and wrongs of it, bouquets and brickbats both. (Best letter came from a certain R. Roy in Belfast; no prizes, but it will pop up in our letters page when we've room). The main complaint from the mail is whether the financial facts, and therefore placings are right, given the change in the value of the dollar over the years, the fluctuating habits of filmgoing and such like. I've rested my case before now, but here's an intriguing postscript. *Variety*, without whose chart of all-time box-office winners, our own chart could not be compiled, have lately issued a list of the hit movies as seen on television since 1961. As obviously more people see tv in America than go to the cinema, the chart tends to clear up some old arguments about which film is more popular than another.



Director George Romero.

just don't want to be mistaken for porno. Ironically the *Mother's Day* director, Charlie Kaufman, used to work in hard-core, so that the X which he self-imposed in his exploitation days, he is now avoiding like the very plague.

Some good may come out of the mess. Violence, extreme, overt, gratuitous violence may finally be put in the grave. Excessive blood and gore, as Hitchcock proved for so long, is not necessary — to imply it is often more

pornography. The so-called straight film-makers do not, therefore, take kindly to being rated as equals of the blue brigades — though they're asking for it by churning out so much vomit-worthy hard-core violence.

Because a film is X-ed, it doesn't follow that the director or his distributor will — or indeed, *has* to agree, and effix the offensive letter to their advertising. Fer from it. They tend to squeal like pigs and fight like mad. They appeal against the rating to the MPAA, but if they cannot win a two-thirds majority vote, the X stays. (Nic Roeg, of all cine-geniuses, has lately lost his fight against an X for *Bed Time*, although it's a wholly artistic film, winner of Best Film at the Toronto Festival and even won, uncut, a British X, which is equivalent to the American R for Restricted age-group audiences).

If they're stuck with an X, the director, or more likely his distributor, opens the film minus any rating at all! He merely hypes it "for adults only" or some such euphemistic line aimed at steering away folk of a nervous disposition or having the basic human abhorrence of seeing heads, arms, legs hacked about in close-up, bodies disintegrating or the undead strolling around urban streets.

Romero's own *Down of the Deed*, and the cheapie Italian import which ripped off his original Italian title, *Zombie*, both opened in this fashion in America. Caroline Munro's extremely nasty American debut, *Maniac*, went the same route and now Charles Kaufman follows suit with his *Mother's Day* — "this

# THINGS TO COME

For instance, tv-wise, *Gone With The Wind* remains the biggest home audience grabber – unbeaten since its 1976 airing. (Star Wars, of course, has not been screened on television... anywhere). As GWTW was shown in two halves, it takes the top two positions, and *Airport* which I tend to include in our chart for its connection with the disaster movies, shares third place with *Love Story*. *Jaws* has sixth position all to itself, with *The Poseidon Adventure* seventh, and Hitchcock's *The Birds* tying for seventh with *Duke's True Grit*. But it's a long way down to No 20 before we reach that is the first real tie in the listings – *Planet of the Apes*... unless you, like Lucas and Co, rate *The Wizard of Oz* in the sf category – at No 18 and 19...

## QUICK TAKES

William Shatner appears in and narrates a new six-part tv documentary series out of New York, *This Was America*... Pino Donaggio, who scored *Nic Roeg's Den's Look Now*, is supplying the musical moods for *The Howling*



... John Brosnan's *Future Tense* book on sf films just published in America (John who?) Paul Lynch, director of Jamie Lee Curtis' *Prom Night*, is making *Humungus* for next to nothing – 1.5 million dollars... Luis Buñuel discovery Carole Bouquet is Roger Moore's leading lady in *For Your Eyes Only*, along with ex-skater Lynn Holly Johnson. These gals are getting so young, Moore will look older than ever... Carlo Rambaldi, man behind *King Kong* and *CE3K's* alien Puck, working on Andrei Kulevski's Franco-German *Possession*, starring Nosferatu's Isabelle Adjani...

## FRENCH FANTASY

The big festivals apart, Paris was the place to be this summer for our kind of movies. There are, of course, more cinemas in Paris than any British city for a kick-off, so there's always something in the fantasy mould on show – new



## SUPER-GUN

Starburst is offering ten bonus points to the first reader who recognises which science fiction film this scene comes from. Sorry, it's a trick question. The futuristic gun depicted here actually appears in the United Artists film *Dogs of War*, based on the best selling novel by Frederick Forsyth. The gun is code-named XM18 Projectile Launcher, and affectionately known as "the mean machine".

Though the gun is no longer on the secrets list, very little is known about it. It is currently undergoing tests both in American and in Great Britain. Weighing a mere 15½ lbs, the weapon is light enough for a man to carry in one hand. Its multi-barrelled action can fire a combination of gas, smoke or high impact missiles over a range of 200 yards.

The world premiere of *Dogs of War* will be in London on December 17th 1980.

or old. Summertime used to be notoriously bad for Parisian cinemas, though, as the entire population took off to kill themselves on the roads of the Riviera beaches. Not any more. Oh, they still kill each other on the road, but more stay behind and the cinemas are finding ways of attracting them inside in the hot weather.

The UGC cine chain, for example, ran its own festival *du frisson* (even sounds good, right?) during August. Films on offer, changing day by day for the set period, ranged from *Alien* and *Phantasm* to *The Island of Dr Morau* and *Frank Langella's Dracula*. Brien De Palma was represented by the awful *Fury* and the terrific *Sisters* (circa '76). Spielberg had *Duel* in the lists, alongside *Exorcist II* (no better three years later) *Omen II* and *Saul Bass' Phase IV*. Telly Savalas turned up in a *Mario Beva* exorcism number, *Frankenstein's Daughter* came in from America and Spain offered *The Revolt of 2000 AD*. Best of the lot – a chance to see writer-director L.Q. Jones' *A Boy and His Dog*, rather better titled by the French as *Apocalypse 2024*. All of which made a good lead-in for the new back-from-the-beaches season starting with *The Empira Strikes Back* and, better late than never (oh, I don't know though), *The Black Hole*.

Enthusiasts are similarly well catered for on the TFI tv channel, with a Saturday evening (*Dr Who* time) show hosted by young sf buff brothers, Igor and Gricke Bogdanoff. As well as the *Anderson's Space 1999*, the brothers' *Temps X* show features discussions on new films, books and space developments, plus extracts from films, new and old, from Hitchcock's *The Birds* to their *Dracula* movie you care to name. Guests on this programme have included George Lucas himself. There was more of George's magic and the *Temps X* gimmick of

explaining just how certain special effects were carried out in an American import called *That's Hollywood*. Actually it's really *That's 20th Century-Fox* – a compilation series of the Fox history, dealing with a different area per week over ten half-hours, hosted by Tom Bosley, Mr C from *Happy Days*. Shows I caught examined the Western and the chase scene – and one was devoted to science fantasy with pieces on *Star Wars*, of course, *Fantastic Voyage*, *Planet of the Apes* and others. It's a good show, but over far too soon – about time the Beeb took a look at it.



My final French tv treat – *Silent Running*. Still good! Bruce Dern appearing to speak French was a bit hard to take (so was understanding "him"). Worse still, though, particularly in a land which reveres Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and the whole Disney gang, in this French language version, Freeman Lowell's two surviving robots, Huey and Dewey became Huey and... Roger!

# YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A STARBURST SWEAT~SHIRT

STARBURST  
SWEAT-SHIRT  
COMPETITION  
ENTRY STAMP

It's a constant source of wonder to us, here at the *Starburst* offices, how many requests we receive for various bits and pieces of *Starburst* paraphernalia.

Every day sees a new batch of letters demanding volume binders, fan clubs and pencil cases! To be honest, it seems very unlikely that we will be supplying any of those three commodities in the foreseeable future. But do not despair. By far the most called-for item of *Starburst* merchandise is a sweat-shirt or tee-shirt. And with the season of tee-shirts far behind us (at least for this year) we decided that we would run up a few sweat-shirts to see how they looked!

The shirts we had made were top quality American sweat-shirts, with a silver glitter *Starburst* emblem over an antique gold design on a black shirt. Needless to say, these shirts were expensive. Too expensive to market. So we decided to do the next best thing — give them away! The fifty shirts (that's right, fifty)

are the only shirts of this kind that will ever be manufactured. Though we are considering the possibility of making *Starburst* shirts available for sale to our readers, the style will be markedly different. So don't delay! Answer the simple questions below and you could win one of our super-deluxe, ultra-rare *Starburst* sweat-shirts!



## THE COMPETITION



**INSTRUCTIONS.** This is the important part! All you have to do is answer the questions below correctly, complete the sentence "I read *Starburst* because . . ." (this will be used as a tie-breaker in the event of more than fifty entries being correct) and clip the Entry Stamp on the corner of this page and include it with your entry. If you do not include the Entry Stamp your entry will be disqualified. All entries must be on post-cards! Do not forget to include the size of shirt you require: small (under 16s), medium or large (over 16s). Because we only have a limited number of shirts, none can be exchanged for any reason.

1. Name the film from which the above scene is taken.
2. Who was the director? and
3. For which movie series is he better known?

**RULES.** Entries must be postmarked no later than 11th December, 1980. The competition is open to every one except the employees of Marvel Comics Ltd., Comag and relatives of those employees. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

**A**s with all artists it's unlikely that a film-maker is ever completely satisfied with his finished work but usually there's never any chance of going back and changing it, film-making being such an expensive process. However when you carry as much weight in the film industry as Steven Spielberg (or at least as much as he did before the disaster of 1941) the usual restrictions don't apply and you can indulge your whims to the full. So when he decided he wanted to shoot new material for *Close Encounters* as well as re-edit much of the movie, Columbia Pictures just took a deep breath and said, "Sure Steve, you go ahead. Do whatever you want. Have fun..."

And what's the result? Well, in some ways he has improved the movie but in other ways he's done the opposite. These changes, which are basically all incidental ones, tend to cancel each other out and you're left with a movie that is fundamentally the same. The major additions are interesting but not of vital importance. The first is the short but spectacular sequence where the UFO investigating team discovers a ship in the middle of the Sahara (actually Death Valley). The second is the extra footage at the

## THE SPECIAL CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE TYPE



**If you haven't already been overawed by the mother ship then these extra scenes aren't going to do the job.**

climax which shows what Roy Neary (*Richard Dreyfuss*) sees when he enters the mother ship. Well, the interior looks very similar to the exterior — a soaring city of lights except this time we see row upon row of little alien faces peering out of the windows of their high-rise apartment blocks.

This reduces Neary to tears but I couldn't help wondering if an alien would have a similar reaction at his first sight of a high-rise block of flats in London or Birmingham or wherever. I really do think this sequence is completely redundant — if you haven't already been overawed by the mother ship then these extra scenes aren't going to do the job. If anything they diminish the sense of wonder already established — the interior of the ship should have remained a mystery (but then I felt that Spielberg made a mistake by showing the aliens at all in the first place — they couldn't help but be a let-down after the tremendous build-up. The first alien to appear — the weird, spindly one — was okay but the little ones just looked like what they were, kids in costumes).

The other main addition appears to be footage of Neary and his family that must have been shot for the original version but not included. Again I can't really see the point of inserting it now, particularly



the long sequence where Neary and his wife take turns at having hysterics (this is after he's seen the UFO) accompanied by the crying of their frightened children. To make room for this Spielberg has cut out a sequence I liked, the meeting between the UFO enthusiasts and the Air Force



spokesman, and also the sequence where Neary alarms his neighbours by tearing up his garden to build his giant model of the Devil's Tower in his living room. Perhaps this latter sequence could have done with being shortened but not removed altogether.



EDITION  
**COUNTERS**  
D KIND Review by John Brosnan



Top: Audiences gather to see if the new, improved *Close Encounters* really is new and improved. Far left: An alien craft checks out Roy Neary's truck. Left: A scene cut from the new version of the film. Above: Neary (Richard Dreyfuss) is over-awed by what he finds inside the Mother Ship.

He's made a lot of smaller changes too, removing the odd scene here and there (I found watching *The Special Edition* a very distracting experience as I constantly tried to work out what was missing and what was new) including one of my favourite lines from the original version.

It came just after the sequence where the UFOs come round the corner hotly pursued by police cars — an old man says, "They may fly rings around us in space but we got them licked on the highways". Instead of that you now just have a close reaction shot of Neary saying, "This is

nuts!" which isn't quite the same.

Despite all of Spielberg's playing around the basic inconsistencies remain, which isn't surprising because to get rid of them you'd have to rewrite the whole script. The one that bothers me most of all is that we see Lacombe's UFO team receive only piece of solid information from the aliens, and that is the map co-ordinates for where the landing is going to take place. And yet they have already prepared a team of astronauts to go on board the alien spaceship (these are the ones in the red jogging suits and sun glasses who look like members of the American Secret Service) who don't look at all friendly and if I was an alien I'd sure think twice about inviting them into my flying saucer. Either Lacombe's people were being amazingly presumptuous or the lines of communications between them and the aliens were more established than was apparent. But if that was the case why was Lacombe and his team getting so excited over just a few musical notes they were picking up from the aliens?

The other major inconsistency is the behaviour of the aliens themselves — their sadistic, poltergeist-like actions in the first part of the picture bear little relation to the benign and friendly Walt Disney

---

*Close Encounters* isn't a movie  
that can be examined logically  
— you just have to watch it  
with your forebrain switched off.

---

characters who emerge from the space ship at the end. But then *Close Encounters* isn't a movie that can be examined logically — you just have to watch it with your fore-brain switched off and let its visual and emotional delights sweep over you. It's pure Sense of Wonder.

By the way, according to the publicity hand-out this version includes "several special effects that were taken out in the process of editing". Well, I sure didn't spot any of them, with the exception of a short scene just after Neary's "close encounter" when we see a huge circular shadow pass over his truck as it drives through the Indiana countryside. The only additional effects scenes that I'm aware of are the new ones at the end of the film showing the interior of the mother ship (and all shot by Robert Swarthe of *Star Trek* — the Motion Picture fame).

If you were a fan of the original *Close Encounters* then you'll like this version too but whether you'll like it any better is debatable, and I think that proves the point that Spielberg needn't really have bothered. Now if he wants to try to improve 1941 then that's a different thing altogether... ●

**W**hen I had the opportunity of interviewing Brian De Palma a few years ago I spent most of the time complaining about the fact that his then latest film, *Obsession*, wasn't like his previous one *Phantom of the Paradise*, which happens to be one of my all-time favourites. Having proved that he could make movies as unique and off-beat as *Phantom* why was he now going back and remaking Hitchcock movies? *Obsession* was, after all, a reworking of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and was, as far as I was concerned, a rather old fashioned and conventional movie to come from the maker of *Phantom*.

Well, the genial Mr De Palma accepted all this rubbish from me with remarkable politeness and said that he hoped to do another film like *Phantom* if he could find a suitable subject to suit that kind of approach but admitted that he was dominated by Hitchcock's influence. "I'm a great admirer of his," he said. "He developed a certain film grammar which I'm just beginning to know how to use. What I've done . . . is to use some of the premises of the movies he did but try to tell different stories. I'm *not* Hitchcock and I'm not worried that I take some of the techniques that he's pioneered in film making . . . it's not a matter of me trying

**Dressed to Kill is in many ways his most blatant reworking of Hitchcock (notably *Psycho*) to date.**

to out-do Hitchcock or improve on him . . . the man's a master, a giant — he's made so many masterpieces. I've just used him, in a way, as a starting point from which I'm developing my own technical skills."

*Dressed to Kill*, his latest movie, is in many ways his most blatant reworking of Hitchcock (notably *Psycho*) to date but at the same time proves he's very much a film maker in his own right. As he says above, he uses Hitchcock as a kind of starting point but goes in a very different direction. For all the structural similarities between Hitchcock's and De Palma's films they are really worlds apart in terms of style and approach. Hitchcock's style was very cold and clinical and while his films often dealt with sexual themes the actual sexuality was kept buried beneath the surface whereas with De Palma it's very much in evidence. His style is a highly sensual one — slow, languid and warm — and at times watching his films is like watching someone else's erotic dreams. In a sense Hitchcock's and De Palma's individual styles reflect their backgrounds — Hitchcock's is typically English, cold and repressed, while De Palma's combines a Mediterranean sensuality with the Italian's love of the

# DRESSED

Brian De Palma's latest offering is a successful study in tension which owes more than a tip of the hat to the great Alfred Hitchcock. John Brosnan reviews the film and finds it an exercise in style over content.



# TO KILL

Below: A selection of scenes from De Palma's *Dressed to Kill*.



DK-SP-6

baroque.

Dressed to Kill is certainly De Palma's most erotic film so far and is more to do with sex than murder. Sex is the motivation and the reason for all that happens in the movie — it's sexual frustration and, subsequently, sexual guilt that leads the Angie Dickinson character, Kate, to her gory death in an elevator, and it's the fact that the Nancy Allen character, Liz, is a high-class prostitute that she happens to be on hand, having just finished an "assignment", to witness Kate's murder and to be also marked as a target by the murderer. And as for the murderer, his/her actions spring from a desire to actually change sex . . .

I think the sequence that best illustrates the difference between Hitchcock's and De Palma's approach to sex is the one where Liz is searching an office while watched from a distance through a pair of binoculars by her accomplice, Peter, Kate's son (*Keith Gordon*). This is a recreation of the famous sequence in *Rear Window* where the James Stewart character, laid up with a broken leg, watches helplessly through a telescope while his girl friend, played by Grace Kelly searches the apartment of a potential killer. But in direct contrast to the strait-laced and ultra-cool Miss Kelly

**It's the way that De Palma handles this old material that makes *Dressed to Kill* such a superb movie.**

(now known, of course, as Princess Grace and also gaining a reputation as an anti-pornography campaigner) De Palma has his heroine dressed in nothing but kinky black underwear and suspender belt. This was obviously a deliberate in-joke on De Palma's part and one can be sure that Princess Grace wouldn't be amused though Hitchcock himself would have no doubt raised a smile at De Palma's audacity.

Dressed to Kill is basically, as other critics have already pointed out, an exercise in pure style over content. There are no new ideas in the movie and the plot is unoriginal — De Palma even steals his own ending from *Carrie* — but it's the way that he handles this old material that makes *Dressed to Kill* such a superb movie. De Palma proves with this *Rolls Royce* of an exploitation movie that he's probably the finest American director at work today. But even so I hope that the tremendous financial success of *Tremors* and *Home Movies*, will provide him the opportunity to move into more original areas.

And I'm still waiting for another *Phantom of the Paradise* . . .

# GALAXINA

Feature by Tony Crawley

**G**alaxina, alas, is not what it was anymore. In truth, I doubt it ever was. A mild-mannered space spoof, it only manages to hit half-way home with its comedy missiles aimed at *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Alien* and the rest.

Difficult, now, to find any of it funny anymore. You look at the screen, gaze in wonderment at the simply gorgeous leading lady, and all you can think is: *What a waste.*

The grisly discovery of the naked corpses of this new sax-siren and her manager-husband — dead from shotgun blasts — in their blood-splattered bedroom in West Los Angeles, has taken the crackle out of her first big movie.

The film had the right idea — a bit of fun at last, *Barbarella*-style at that, up in the cosmos. It never did have anything close to a good script, however; nor, it must be said, much of a director. In fact, all the movie did have was Dorothy Stratten, *Playboy*'s Playmate of the Year. Though it barely used her not inconsiderable talents (I'm sure she'll appear much less wooden in her final film, *They All Laughed*), *Galaxina* needed her on the public appearance trail to help hype the movie into the box-office charts.

Without Dorothy around — a victim, so it's been variously reported of (a) her husband's jealousy of her success (b) of her alleged extra-marital affairs or (c) just the Hollywood rat-race — the film is, sadly, a bit of a bomb.

Dorothy's unnecessary death — shot by her husband Paul Snider, who then turned the shotgun on himself — made more headlines than the movie... and on the very day the film opened for try-out business in Kansas City.

The distributors, Crown International, decided to proceed with their release pattern, but cancelled all press screenings in order to maintain a low profile. Producer Marilyn J. Tenser (wife of Mark Tenser, producer of *The Hearse*) clearly did not wish to be seen cashing in on the Stratten tragedy. (More likely, critics weren't invited as *Galaxina* had not turned out quite as planned — and would have been unceremoniously panned).

Despite a certain, inevitable and unforgivable (but very American) morbid interest on the part of certain of the public connecting the grim headlines

from LA with the film opening in KC, it had not created any great waves at the American box-office, and or so I'm told, it is now being re-edited to speed up some of the more turgid of its 95 minutes.

The yellower sections of the American (and indeed, British) Press had a field day with Dorothy's death, making both it and the girl's life-style appear more lurid than either necessary or correct. True, she had been a *Playboy* bunny, graduated to the Playmate fold-out spot and had just recently become 1980's Playmate of the Year, with all the rich prizes and everything else that is usually rumoured to include. Like an affair with the boss of the bunny hutch, Hugh M. Hefner.

The papers wildly reported on this and other alleged affairs, saying that Dorothy's husband was jealous of her rapid triumph in Los Angeles, and was angry at her appearing nude in *Playboy*. Most of which is nonsense. Paul Snider had, after all, been the first to mail Dorothy's photos to *Playboy* in the hope she'd be picked for the centre-spread spot. Rather than being against her *Playboy* work, husband manager Snider was working hard in parlaying such fame into Hollywood film roles.

If he was jealous of anything — and he was most certainly damn upset about something — it was probably more to do with an alleged affair Dorothy was having with the director of what is now her last film, *Petar Bogdanovich*. The Snider couple had, though, long separated before she went off to the New York locations, about the time of their first wedding anniversary. They had apparently been seeing marriage counsellors and it was in order to discuss their future that Dorothy made her fateful visit to what had been the couple's home in August.

Enough of the gossip... Dorothy Stratten's short lived glory (she was only 20) was the latest in the oldest rags to riches success stories that Hollywood can still bring off. As a teenager, she sold ice-cream from a stand in Vancouver. At 18, she was invited to LA during *Playboy*'s big talent for its 25th anniversary Playmate. She made the August 1979 spot instead, at 19, made her movie debut — she played a Bunny in *Americanthon* and a recurring comedy bit in *Skatetown*



USA. Back home in Canada, she starred for the first time in *Autumn Born*, returning to LA for guest roles in *Fantasy Island* and *Buck Rogers* — she played Miss Cosmos, "the most beautiful woman in the universe". She looked it, too — which aroused the interest of Marilyn Tenser.

Having done well with what she calls her "teenage fantasy movies" — *The Pom Pom Girls*, *The Van*, etc — Ms Tenser wanted to try something bigger. William Sachs, the director of her other teenage hit, *Van Nuys Boulevard*, had written something called *Galaxina* which she loved and she set about finding the right girl to play the title role — a robot.

"I met and personally interviewed 300 girls," says Marilyn Tenser. "Then, one



day Dorothy Stratten walked in — in a couple of hours she had the part. It isn't just that she looked right, but she was also a good actress and had an exciting quality on screen. We also decided to cast some known names, — for the first time in my career — although people I used first got to be names, later, of course."

The (so-called) names include Stephen Macht, from better than average tele-movie fare like *Ring of Passion* (he played Max Schmeling in the story of the German boxer's great fights with Joe Louis), *The Immigrants*, *Amelia Earhart*



and the movies, *The Choirboys* and *Nightwing* — and the less said about those the better. Also cast: James David Hinton, a one-time day-jaw whose tv guest shots have been on *Salvage One* and *Mork* and *Mindy*; and the American comedian, Avery Schreiber, almost a star in America but unknown elsewhere.

"I wanted to give people what they can't find on television," added Marilyn Tenser. (So why used tv 'names'?) "Certainly there aren't the special effects on television that we have in *Galaxina*." That's not altogether true, but you know how producers are . . .

To be fair, some of the effects aren't bad; the infra-red glow of the climactic shoot out, for example, and a great dig at

the *Star Wars* cantina sequence, more make-up than special effects, particularly as one actor, Herb Kaplowitz, plays three of the ghoulies. The rest of the effects are . . . about as lame-brained as the script.

Chuck Colwell was in charge of the photographic effects, but overall the effects stem from the film's associate producer, George E. Mather. He's officially described in the film's publicity hype as "creator of special effects in *Star Wars*." Him and 50 others . . . Well, you also know how publicists are . . . Mather was, though, part of the Lucas team: production supervisor of the miniature and optical effects unit. He's come down in the world a bit since then! Still gets a kick out of such fantasy trips, apparently. He plays one of the low-lives in a galactic pub — the Horn Man.

And so, to the film itself . . .

We are on the good ship *Infinity*, in the year 3008. Most of the crew are in their personal *Dark Star*/*Alien* freezers and Dorothy Stratten keeps everything on an even keel as the ship's computerised robot — better looking than either Ian Holm or Anthony Daniels. She runs the ship while the crew snooze, while they're awake, too, suffering acutely from the *ennui* of seven years in space.

Avery Schreiber is the ship's commander, foul of mouth (not surprising with a name like Butt) and nutty of brain. Few of his crew appear to be any more sane. They're bored with their jobs. They are, in effect, policing the great motorway in the sky, which has become as crowded as any on earth, circa 1980. They give chase to any unidentified spacecraft which livens up the odd day, and patrol the various joints of ill-repute scattered about the galaxy, which helps a bit with the nights.

It's the inbetween times that's so dull. *Galaxina* does everything. They needn't lift a finger.

Thor the pilot (*Stephen Macht*) has been up there so long, he's become lovestruck by the beautiful robot. It figures. One look at *Galaxina* explains why, although one is left with the nagging doubt that after seven years aloft, Thor might feel similarly enamoured of C-3PO.

It is, of course, somewhat difficult to actually consummate an affair with a machine. So Thor's great love isn't exactly doing him, his piloting or his libido much good. Not to mention his sanity. *Galaxina*'s a friendly soul, though. She understands the problem. Or some of it. Overnight, she re-programmes herself with voice-box and emotions. It helps . . . particularly when *The Infinity* is ordered off to the alien planet of *Alta 1* — which happens to be a mere 28 years away!

On a trip of that length, a machine with feelings must have its uses.

The *Alta* mission is to find a mystical gem called *The Blue Star* — "it has the power of the stars within it". Not easy to

locate, however. Once again, *Galaxina* comes to everybody's rescue . . . after a shoot-out with a hulking, *Darth Vaderian* baddy in a Western township called *Custard's Last Stand* (and the humour rarely rises above that) and a battle with a bunch of bikers (in 3008 AD?)

On the long journey back home, with captain, crew, gem and something like collective sanity intact, *Galaxina* deals with Thor's other problem. After a couple of unsuccessful skirmishes together, she (it?) tips him the wink that if he were to check through her spare-parts catalogue, her various missing organs and other sundry apparatus could be located and . . . well, made the fullest possible use of.

So you see what I mean — the idea wasn't bad, great scope for both matching and sending up all the sf mega-hits of the last few years. Once in awhile, *Galaxina* comes to life, almost by accident, never for long, and never often. William Sachs may have had a goodish storyline, but he's plainly ill-equipped to transfer it to the screen.

Producer Marilyn Tenser would have been far better off bringing in someone other than one of her teenage-fantast directors. Dan O'Bannon could have shot it in a weekend between his other work and given it what it lacks — that wonderful *Dark Star* wit. An even better idea might have been for Marilyn to simply hand her project on a plate to the Kentucky Fried Theatre trio which directed *Airplane*. They could have made this into a really zany winner.

As it is, it just lays there. The true spoofing potential has been unforgettably wasted . . . just, alas, like poor Dorothy Stratten herself.

## Galaxina (1980)

Stephen Macht (*as Thor*), Dorothy R. Stratten (*Galaxina*), James David Hinton (*Buzz*), Avery Schreiber (*Capt. Butt*), Ronald Knight (*Ordric*), Lionel Smith (*Maurice*), Tad Horino (*Sam Wo*), Herb Kaplowitz (*Rock Eater*; *Kitty*; and *Ugly Alien Woman*), Nancy McCauley (*Elxial*), Fred D. Scott (*Commander*), George E. Mather (*Horn Man*), Barbara Zane (*Little Old Lady*), Mike Castle (*Red Skin Man*), Hugh Anderson (*Earthman*), Susan Kiger (*Blue Girl*), Marilyn Jo (*Winged Girl*), David A. Cox (*Bartender*), Stephen Morrell (*Chopper*), Pete Scrum (*Biker Guard*), Dee Cooper (*Gen. Custer*), Rhonda Shear (*Mime*), John Sistrunk (*Stunt-biker*), Angelo Rossitto (*Egg Monster*).

Written and directed by William Sachs, Photographed by Dean Cundy, Edited by Larry Block, Production Designer Tom Turley, Costumes by Malissa Daniel, Make-up, Teresa Austin, Special Make-Up Effects, Christopher J. Walas, Special Photographic Effects Supervisor, Chuck Colwell, Associate Producer, George E. Mather, Produced by Marilyn J. Tenser.

A Marimark Production or Crown International Pictures (US) release. Time: 95 minutes.

# JOANNA



**T**here has been a disruption in the time and space continuum. The element tin has been assigned . . . "I had been asked to lunch with Joanna Lumley, the actress who plays Sapphire opposite David McCallum as Steel, the two time detectives in the television series, *Sapphire and Steel*. The spot chosen was ATV studios at Elstree, where the psychically inexplicable seems to regularly and reliably occur, demanding their presence. The steak on my plate had been grilled and not otherwise subjected to any mysterious forces, as Ms Lumley joined me to tell me about her supernatural adventures. A forthright and composed woman, she speaks with rapid assurance to put me at ease in the all too worldly noise of the studio restaurant. The show has a novel premise. Its writer, P.J. Hammond, a veteran of *Z Cars* scripts, thought of doing a supernatural police show, so he created two agents, called "elements", dispatched from an unknown source in the universe to correct any disruptions in time and space

caused by unexplained phenomena on Earth. The elements are Sapphire, who has the power to commune with psychic forces which have entered human beings, and to stop time itself, when necessary, for a while. Steel is her mentor and intellectual guide. Without her, he would be powerless, but if she were without him she would be taken over by the forces she

---

**"Sapphire is probably stronger than Steel. She seems to be more adroit in the mental capability." — Joanna Lumley.**

---

encounters. To say the least, they are pretty indispensable of each other, and in the twice weekly, early evening serial stories, they do create a dense, satisfying air of mystery. If sometimes the show's questions about the latent powers of the human mind are as vague as its answers, then its makers would claim that they are providing entertainment about the

unexplained, not solutions. The writer does have one theme which can be usually relied upon to be arresting, as it is so unusual. It occurred to him that stories about time travel feature people going from the present back into the past or forward into the future. He thought of fragments of the past or future itself actively intruding into the present, often for some sinister purpose at the direction of some unnameable being controlling the people involved. Sounds a lot like good old fashioned evil to me. The time Joanna Lumley has spent so far in making the second series has not dimmed her loyalty to the character.

"Sapphire, I think, is probably stronger than Steel", she says. "She seems to be more adroit in the mental capability, that can get them out quickly from trouble. It's very difficult, because you see, when you work on this show as closely as we do, you actually . . . I mean, we're constantly on the watch for not letting it become too confusing. Dense mystery is very exciting, but it's also

# LUMLEY

An interview by Nicholas Leahy



inclined to make the viewers turn off, because they simply can't be bothered. But some points are quite clear. For example, Sapphire's eyes turn blue when she's going to phase time around, forwards or backwards an hour or a day, or whatever. So that's the time trick we established very early on in the first series.

"In the first series, we weren't completely successful. We were seventy five percent successful. For instance in the station story (*where soldiers of the past return courtesy of a middle-aged, amateur psychic enthusiast*). To be successful, we should have turned time back, and saved the little old psychic man. I mean, he actually had to be sacrificed, which was wrong, because Sapphire and Steel were at fault. And by the time he was going to die, he knew he was going to die, and did it wonderfully." Very heavy for children? "But great, I think, actually," she says. "Quite moral stuff in there, quite a lot of regular human morals creeping into this."

In the new series, there is a story about a couple who came back from the

future to live in a flat in the present, to sample the novelty of living in such primitive conditions. A let's-play-at-living-in-The-Iron-Age style enterprise, doomed to failure, of course. And another story about a costume ball in the style of The Thirties held in a country house, which becomes the physical host for the ghost of a similar, original event. Are there any

---

**"Sapphire and Steel died a long time ago, which is why they are able to flash in and out of walls and turn time backwards."**

---

interesting scenes or effects in them she likes? "I haven't seen any complete shows. Because things that you don't think are going to work, work magically. And other things which you were rather hoping would be a success, have been elbowed because they didn't look quite so good." Is it like constructing a mosaic? "Very much. We do it more like film than

television, apart from the very odd occasion that I can remember. We did a twelve minute take in the seance scene in one of the station sequences, with all the cameras going. The special effects are done in such weeny details. People disappearing, and running locked off cameras and mixing alternate images. Actually making it is interesting but dull at the same time. It's the script, technology. Very much people in the control room who add to the atmosphere, some of them work so frightfully hard, and it's so simple, that it's just exceptionally good." It still feels like a card trick rather than actually sweating for a result? "Absolutely," she says.

How does Joanna Lumley see the characters of Sapphire and Steel? "I'm certain that enemy, in this case (the episode being recorded), is evil, and Sapphire and Steel are good. But I've also worked out that we're ghosts. We died a long time ago, which is why we are able to disappear and flash in and out of walls, and turn time backwards and forwards."

But do you have human bodies; "Oh, we must. It's essential we must. Or else I would have to be an appallingly barren, plastic person. In the first series, Sapphire cut her hand and it bled. She's human when she wants to be, but then she can cut her hand off and put it back on again." So for the time and space detectives in this show, it takes a ghost to tackle a ghost? "Yes," she says. "But they're not all human ghosts either. Ghosts are more flexible and they're not lumbered with the things that make people more inflexible. They're always at the service of good, but they're more susceptible to evil. The soldiers on the platform in the first series were all taken over by evil because they were all burning with resentment because they had been killed unfairly. And evil manipulated them there." She agrees that the writer is trying to make optimistic choices for both the human and etherial characters, without becoming too vapid.

Joanna Lumley was born in India, became a fashion model in *The Sixties*, and an actress appearing occasionally on television in the Seventies. She recently became well known playing Purdey in *The New Avengers*, opposite Patrick MacNee and Gareth Hunt. After an avenging secret agent, she was teamed with David McCallum, who found fame in the Sixties as Ilya Kuriyakin, the Russian spy and friend of *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*.

---

**"Sapphire didn't exist until I  
fleshed her out. She wasn't real."**

---

What kind of work would she like to do in the future? "I should like to be asked to do some acting, rather than performing," she says. "It's no use trying to impose it on the show, because it must fit the character. I'm much more interested in the show than my own career anyway, so I ask myself what would I do if I had to act? I don't have to do it with a song on my lips and a follow spot on me. But on the other hand, merely being somebody like a Sapphire or a Purdey, is good, but limits you. I should like to mimic a real woman. So rather than having to be yourself, looking as pretty as possible, Purdey was invented, she didn't come out of a book, I made her up. Sapphire didn't exist until I fleshed her out, she wasn't real. I should like to *mimic* somebody."

How do children react to her as Sapphire? "I think I do everything for children," she says. "They have great minds, actually, and such generosity. I love to tell stories to them. They're not interested in art, it's just fun. They're not so critical as an audience, they just say, come on, give it to me. One of the nicest things about children is that their optimism is two hundred percent. They're extremely good at seeing what



*A selection of scenes from the ATV series Sapphire and Steel, with Joanna Lumley and David McCallum in the title roles.*

they want to, and rejecting phoney attitudes." Does she like to protect them from disillusionment? "As much as possible," she says fervently.

The question about *Sapphire and Steel*, going on the air as it does at seven o'clock at night, is whether it was originally meant to be a children's programme or not. It seems that that was certainly not writer P.J. Hammond's original intention. "That would have been awful", he said. "It is true that ATV were in two minds at first, whether to put it on in the children's hour or not, but then they decided that as it had an unusual format that did not fit into a specific

category, they would hire two television stars and make it as an adult programme they could be aimed at all the family."

The writer had no specific actors in mind when he wrote the first script. But he says now that the faces of Joanna Lumley and David McCallum seem to fit perfectly the vague ones he had in mind at the time. Now that they are acting the parts, he says: "They're perfect. I couldn't imagine anybody being better in them."

Joanna Lumley is pleased to hear it, and comments on David McCallum. "You know, he's a very attractive looking man, and with his looks, he could have gone for being effective and charming and all



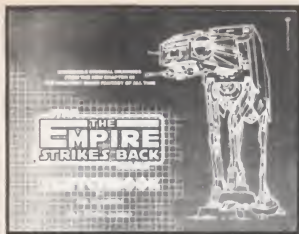


that. But he hasn't. He's gone for playing Steel as angry and intense, and determined to get on with it. That's interesting, and really very good. Children, they're afraid of him, but they know that they can come up and hold my hand and it'll be all right. They're frightened by Steel and they trust Sapphire." You're like a surrogate mother and father to them? "Yes," she says.

On the set after lunch, Joanna Lumley appears wearing a black evening dress at the top of a circular flight of stairs which end in mid-air off camera, with David McCallum in a tuxedo. They wander down in between takes into the two room

set of a country house, where a young girl and party-goer walks around smiling with a silver dinner knife permanently sticking out of her waist. Off set, six grown men are gathered in obsessive concern as one of their number drops a clay ashtray on the ground to break in front of a camera. Sitting in the dining room, I hear David McCallum, in the droll, quiet English accent that used to belong to *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, but is still his copy-right, say during a moment's studio pause for frustration, "My name is Luke Skywalker, princess. I have come to rescue you." More mysteries in the fictional life of Sapphire and Steel. ●





**'EMPIRE STRIKES BACK' SKETCHBOOK** by JOE JOHNSTON and NICK RODIS-JANAIRO  
A selection of imaginative and detailed designs including Rebel Cruiser Taun-taun, Darth Vader's ship, Snow-Walker and Imperial Probot. 96 pages. £2.95 & 75p postage and packing

**FRANK FRAZZETTA: BOOK FOUR**  
Latest book in this phenomenally popular series includes previously unpublished studies from his sketch book and superb four colour reproduction of original paintings. £3.95 and 75p postage and packing

available from:

**FORBIDDEN PLANET**  
23 DENMARK ST  
LONDON WC2H 8NN, ENGLAND

**12 B/W 16x12  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
PRINTS**



## The M.E.A. Science Fantasy Photographic Calendar

Please forward £2.99 inc p+p

To: MER Productions

57 Unbridge Road Stanmore, Middx HA7 3LJ

NAME

ADDRESS

CAUTION ADULT CALENDAR



# ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP

**THE MAKING OF**

# STAR TREK

**THE MOTION PICTURE**

Size 6 x 9...221pgs (illustrated) plus 16pgs in colour  
**HARDCOVER £9.75 PAPERBACK £5.25**

**STAR TREK - THE MOTION PICTURE: THE  
PHOTOSTORY** (Full colour throughout) **£2.05**

ALL ABOVE PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE AND PACKING  
PAYMENT IS ACCEPTED BY ACCESS OR BARCLAYCARD

**57 Summer Row  
Birmingham B3 1JJ**

Tel: (021) 236 1112



**POSTER  
SERIES**

by **BRIAN  
BOLLAND**



**POSTER NO.1  
GIANT-SIZE  
JUDGE  
DREDD**

8ft. high  
£2.95 + 60p post & pack.



**POSTER NO.2  
JUDGE  
DEATH**  
Judge Dredd's  
arch-enemy

Size: 34" x 13"  
£1.95 + 35p post & pack.



**POSTER NO.3  
WALTER  
THE WOBOT**  
Judge Dredd's  
faithful servant  
Size: 23" x 13"  
95p + 30p post & pack.

OR ALL THREE  
FOR ONLY  
£5.90 + 75p post & pack.  
PLEASE MAKE  
CHEQUES AND POSTAL  
ORDERS (NO CASH)  
PAYABLE TO:  
**FORBIDDEN PLANET**  
23 DENMARK ST,  
LONDON WC2H 8NN  
ENGLAND

# FLASH GORDON

A Review by John Brosnan

**W**ell, Dino De Laurentiis has done it again. The man who brought you the second King Kong, the second Hurricane, Orca, The Bible, Anzio, Kiss the Girls and Make Them Die and many other films you'd like to forget now brings you Flash Gordon... and I sure wish he hadn't.

It was *Flash Gordon* that George Lucas originally wanted to film but when he couldn't obtain the rights to the strip he made *Star Wars* instead though visual elements from Alex Raymond's comic strip figure prominently in both *Star Wars* and *Empire Strikes Back*. (The ice world setting in the latter movie, for instance, is straight out of *Flash Gordon*.) One presumes that if Lucas had made *Flash Gordon* he would have handled it in the same way he did the *Star Wars* movies, ie — with a straight face. Not only did Lucas prove that this was the best way to treat what is basically comic strip material on the screen but so did Richard Donner with *Superman*. (Parts of *Superman* were played for laughs but they mainly concerned the villains — Superman himself was treated straight and with respect.)

But Dino, director Mike Hodges and his script writer Lorenzo Semple Jnr, don't seemed to have learned from either *Star Wars* or *Superman* — their approach is one of pure camp reminiscent of the *Batman* tv series, which used to be written by none other than Lorenzo Semple Jnr (surprise!). The last time someone made a film this way was in 1975 with the late George Pal's *Doc Savage* and we all know what happened to that one...

No, *Flash Gordon* isn't quite as bad as *Doc Savage* but I will stick my neck out and predict that *Flash* isn't going to set any 1981 box office records. Mainly because I think younger audiences are going to realise pretty quickly that they're being patronised by this movie and all the "nudge-nudge" type humour it contains. I could be wrong, of course.

I think what I found most disappointing about it, apart from the grating, unremitting companies, was that it bore virtually no resemblance to Alex Raymond's original conception. Instead the strongest visual influence seems to have come from Dino's previous space opera, *Barbarella* (along with some of the



jokes), particularly with the lurid swirling backgrounds that are supposed to represent outer space or whatever (and the long-shots of Ming's city reminded me of the city of Sogo in *Barbarella*). There are also strong elements of MGM's Wizard of Oz. Noticeable mainly in the costume designs, some of the sets and especially in the sequences with the birdmen flying en masse which were similar to the flying monkey scenes in Oz. Also the villains in Flash have a tendency to melt away when killed, just like the witch in Oz.

The other dominant influence seems to be not the actual comic strip but the *Flash Gordon* serials of the 1930s. This is evident in both the dialogue and the way the various space ships and flying machines are presented. Which leads us, I'm afraid, to the special effects . . . These are indescribable but I'll have a go anyway. At times they are actually inferior to the ones in the old serials. The worst thing is the blue screen work — it's as if all the advances with this troublesome process over the last few years were never made. Photographic Effects Supervisor Frank Van Der Veer and his team go right back to square one and the matte lines around everyone are so thick you expect the actors to collapse under the weight of them. Even the most spectacular of the effects sequences, such as the ones where the bird men take to the air, are undermined and spoiled by the shoddiness of the blue screen work.

Some of the physical effects are

impressive though, like the sequence where Flash and Dale's plane crashes into Zarkov's glass-house, but one can only assume that the sheer overall tackiness of the visual effects is the result of a deliberate attempt to reproduce the cardboard quality of the serials.

The plot, such as it is, borrows from both the serials and the comic strip: Ming the Merciless (*Max Von Sydow*) is subjecting the Earth to an onslaught of earthquakes, hurricanes and fiery hail-stones, partly for the sheer fun of it and also to test human development. The plane carrying Flash Gordon (*Sam Jones*), famous football star, and Dale Arden (*Melody Anderson*), PR lady, is caught up in one of these storms and crashes right into the laboratory of the mad Dr Zarkov (*Chaim Topol*) who is about to launch a space ship to investigate the source of all these disasters.

He tricks Flash and Dale into entering his craft and off they go to the planet Mongo where they are immediately captured by Ming's guards and taken to his throne room. Ming, for some inexplicable reason, falls for Dale and decides to make her his bride. Flash puts up a gallant resistance and uses his American pro football skills to scatter Ming's men while Dale acts as a cheer-leader on the sidelines (if you can watch this sequence without cringing under your seat with embarrassment then *Flash Gordon* is the movie for you).

Flash is overpowered and later "executed" in a gas chamber but Ming's daughter, the beautiful Princess Aura (*Ornella Muti*) bribes a doctor to keep him alive and then smuggles him away in her flying machine to the jungle kingdom of Prince Barin (*Timothy Dalton*). Meanwhile Dr Zarkov is having his brain washed clean by the evil Klytus (*Peter Wyngarde*), head of Ming's secret police and the film's equivalent of Darth Vader. The sequence features a montage of Zarkov's memories showing the highlights

of his Jewish upbringing, including images of Nazi Germany, taking him all the way back to his actual birth and beyond which is strangely out of step with the rest of the movie's relentlessly camp approach).

After a fight in the swamp Flash and Barin are captured by Vultan's (*Brian Blessed*) wing men and taken to his city in the sky (which bears a strong resemblance to the floating city in *The Empire Strikes Back*). Flash tries to persuade Vultan to rebel against Ming but Vultan refuses and instead forces Flash and Barin to fight to the death on a circular, floating platform from which spikes rise at random (choreographed by Bill Hobbs, this is a well-staged fight sequence). Meanwhile, back at the fortress, Ming's daughter is being picturesquely tortured by Klytus and his female assistant Kala (*Mariangel Melato*). Being whipped doesn't faze her but her resolve crumbles when she is subjected to the dreaded "borer worms" and she confesses all. We never see the borer worms, unfortunately, so their exact nature can only be guessed at . . .

Ming's forces, led by Klytus, launch an attack on Vultan's city. The wing men flee the crumbling structure and Flash, at the last moment, discovers a rocket cycle which he escapes on. Led by Flash and Vultan the wing men attack Ming's flag ship and overwhelm it at which point the ship's captain immediately cries, "stop all engines!" for some strange reason. Naturally you would expect the ship to drop like a stone but it just hangs there as if it was in outer space, which it obviously isn't. The battle itself, similar to the one at the climax of *Moonraker*, is impressive and is spoiled only by the occasional sight of the wires supporting the bird men, as well as by the inevitable matte lines . . .

Flash, piloting the captured ship, and the wing men proceed to Ming's stronghold and arrive in time to interrupt





Ming's wedding to Dale in a most spectacular way (Ming certainly gets the point, in more ways than one) and to prevent Ming from sending the moon crashing into Earth. But as the credits roll a question mark appears after THE END, suggesting that a sequel is on the cards, a prospect that is far from cheering.

The film provides some incidental pleasures along the way but overall I found it to be a tremendous disappointment and a major misjudgement on the part of the people behind it. As for the cast — well, Sam Jones as Flash doesn't exactly give a performance. He displays the same sort of presence as a clothes store dummy and is just about as expressive.

But in direct contrast to Jones' passiveness the Jewish star, Topol, gives a 50 megaton clowning performance as Zarkov that is so over the top it's in orbit. He even out-harms Brian Blessed as Vultan, which isn't easy. The grinning Blessed can show more of his teeth than any other living actor. The thought that Topol is the villain in the next Bond movie, *For Your Eyes Only*, is a depressing one.

The great Swedish actor Max Von Sydow is fine as Ming but you get the feeling he's in the wrong movie, and you get the feeling *he* thinks he's in the wrong movie too. Best among the male actors is Timothy Dalton as Barin who plays it absolutely straight and succeeds in rising above the tawdry material. As Klytus Peter Wyngarde certainly sounds good — we never see his face — delivering his lines in slinky, sinister tones that remind one of the late George Sanders.

Among the women Melody Anderson (first seen in John Carpenter's *Elvis: The Movie*) is adequate in the bland role of Dale but is outshone by Ornella Muti (real name Francesca Romana Rivelli, and yes, she is Italian) as Aura. Ms Muti is going to go far, if she hasn't already...

One can't help wondering how the movie would have turned out if Nicholas

Roeg had stayed with the project. It would obviously have been a very different movie, and possibly a difficult one too, knowing of Roeg's predilection for multi-layered, time-twisting narrative structures, but it would surely have been a much more interesting film than what we've ended up with (see Tony Crawley's interview with Roeg in *Starburst* 23) and probably more faithful to the *Flash Gordon* strip on the visual level at least. "I love the *Flash Gordon* books," Roeg said, "... and I gradually came to the conclusion that Alex Raymond was a genius, an absolute genius." But it was not to be. After a year of pre-production planning he and De Laurentiis came to a parting of the ways (I was amazed that the two of them ever got together on the film in the first place — their respective approaches to film making are light years apart) with De Laurentiis abandoning Roeg's concept and going for a purely "commercial" type of movie.

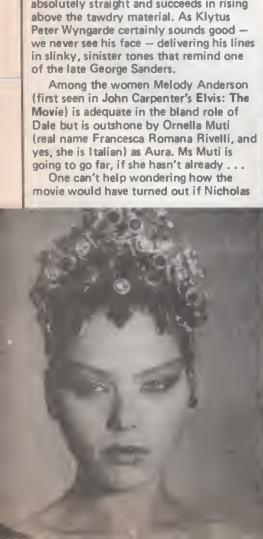
The result is a campy, jokey spoof that resembles nothing more than an expensive remake of *Flesh Gordon* without the sex, and also without that much cheaper movie's good special effects. And what's more, *Flesh Gordon* was funnier... ●

## A Review by Alan Jones

If the character of Flash Gordon reminds you of Buster Crabbe's exploits in vintage 1930s serials, then this new version of *Flash Gordon* is definitely for you. Whether the same can be said if you are a lover of Alex Raymond's creation from the syndicated comic strips — then I'm not so sure. Viewed today *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* and his *Trip to Mars* are hilarious romps combining camp comedy with cheap special effects and even though producer Dino De Laurentiis wasn't too sure if Lorenzo Semple Junior's screenplay for the film was supposed to be funny or not, Semple has wisely played on these humorous elements. In doing so, Semple, who wrote the *Batman* television series in the mid sixties, has captured the very essence of the serialisations.

Starting with the very genesis of the *Flash Gordon* legend, we first see Flash, "the famous American football star", boarding an airplane with fellow traveller Dale Arden. Before they have even had

Far left: Max Von Sydow as Ming the Merciless. Opposite right: *Flash Gordon* (Sam Jones) is lowered into a swampy grave. Below left: Ornella Muti (real name Francesca Romana Rivelli) plays Princess Aura, daughter of Ming. Below: Flash (Sam Jones) and Prince Barin (Timothy Dalton) are made to fight to the death on a floating, spiky platform.



time to introduce themselves, they both find themselves battling earthquakes, hurricanes and hailstones of fire, which forces them to crash-land on Dr Hans Zarkov's laboratory. Zarkov tells them that the disasters are the work of Emporer Ming the Merciless who, from his palace on the planet Mongo, has pulled the moon 12 degrees out of its orbit, meaning it will collide with the Earth in 10 days. With this deadline in mind the three blast off to Mongo in an effort to save their planet. Captured on Mongo, Flash is sentenced to death and Zarkov is sent to be brainwashed into one of the Emporer's loyal workers. Dale is horrified to learn that Ming's evil plans for her include marriage, but help is soon close at hand! Ming's daughter, the Princess Aura, has designs on Flash for herself and helps him escape to the kingdom of Arboria where he begins rallying Prince Barin, head of the Tree-men and Vultan, leader of the Hawk-men, towards a revolt against Ming's tyrannical rule. Do they succeed? Is Ming vanquished? Surely, you don't need to ask and in true Flash Gordon fashion there's a cliff-hanger at the climax of the film which literally ends with a question mark.

Some of the dialogue exchanges are extremely funny. Dale and Flash are reunited on the Hawk-men's City in the Sky. Dale: "Oh Flash, I've got so much to tell you". Flash: "Save it for our children". Dale: (as she is being pulled away from all the fighting) "Please. Can't you see I've just got engaged?". Or how about the scene in the dungeon where Prince Barin and Zarkov are chained on the wall together. Prince Barin: "What was that about a man called Houdini?". This should give you a rough idea of what to expect.

The special effects in *Flash Gordon* are by George Gibbs (*Arabian Adventure*) Glen Robinson (*Logan's Run*, *King Kong & Meteor*) and Richard Conway and, to be honest, they are very mediocre but in a way this actually complements the story. The obvious blue screen work, matte lines and transparent model shots all add to the general feeling of idiocy about the film and besides, if people keep expecting bigger and better special effects with every new science-fiction film released, they are nearly always going to be disappointed!

The cast is uniformly adequate, the exception being Chaim Topol who seems ill at ease and uncomfortable with his role as Zarkov. Sam Jones looks the part of Flash, which is really half the battle as a good actor isn't needed and he plays it very straight which is exactly right. Max Von Sydow doesn't quite erase the memory of Charles Middleton's characterisation of Ming from the serials but has a good try at being as viciously evil as possible. However, the real star of *Flash*



*Gordon* isn't anybody in front of the camera, it is from someone behind it. The contribution of Art Director Danilo Donati towards the success of the film cannot be underestimated. The huge futuristic sets which can only be described as psychedelic art-deco, and the intricate costumes add the most extraordinary visual impact that ravishes the eye. *Flash Gordon* is a stunning tour de force for the art department and Donati, who designed a lot of Federico Fellini's films, keeps up the comedic flow with his visual excesses. Touches like the graffiti written in the dungeons and on the palace walls of "Long live Flash" and "Ming is dead" make the film an enjoyable experience.

Mike Hodges' sure direction keeps up

the pace never letting it flag throughout the film's 116 minute running time. Nicholas Roeg had been the first choice as director but was replaced when it became apparent that his concept of the film was nearer that of the 1974 pseudo-erotic spoof, *Flesh Gordon*, than that of the wholesome family entertainment that Dino De Laurentiis had in mind. That spoof, *Flesh Gordon*, arguably had better special effects than *Flash Gordon* but I derived far more pleasure and enjoyment out of this new larger than life version and hopefully, despite the greater awareness of the technique of special effects, we haven't yet forgotten the fundamental purpose of the cinema, which is to entertain.



Above inset: *Ming the Merciless* (Max Von Sydow) and his hatchet man *Klytus* (Peter Wyngarde), Above: *Flash Gordon* (Sam Jones) wields a sword like a master. Below left: *Kala* (Mariangela Melato) is second in command of Ming's secret police and assistant to the evil *Klytus*. Below centre: *Prince Barin* (Timothy Dalton) rules the jungle Kingdom of *Arboria*. Below right: *Chiam Topol* portrays the Earth scientist *Dr Zerkov*.



# THREE WINTER WINNERS FROM PIERROT



MAGICAL RACES  
MYTH AND LEGEND  
ALLAN SCOTT  
AND  
MICHAEL SCOTT ROHAN

## FANTASTIC PEOPLE

A celebration of the fantasy characters and creatures that have come to us from hundreds of years of myth and legend. *Fantastic People* traces the origins of the goblins, gnomes, elves, trolls, dragons and some creatures many of us will never before have come across. The story of their world and their beginnings is related by two experts with a fascination for the imaginary world of folklore, where there is a twilight we cannot quite discard, a land which exists to one side of our own and contains all the dreams of what we would like to see, or hate to be. With over a hundred pages of illustrations, mostly in colour, the book is a tour de force of fantasy and the people who inhabit its worlds: gods, titans, dragons, shape-shifters, vampires, ghosts and ghouls, water-folk, mermaids and mermen, the green people, witches, elves and many more. All lavishly illustrated and varied.

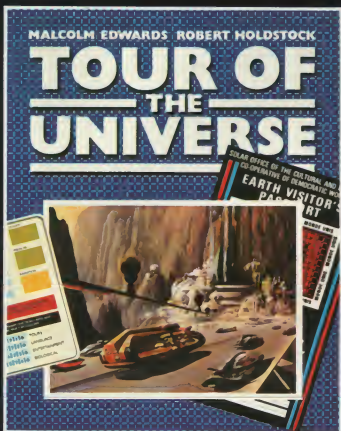
£7.95 *hardcover*



Pierrot Publishing Ltd  
60, Greek Street, London W1V 5LR  
Telephone: 01-439 2596

Distributed by  
New English Library  
Barnard Inn, Holborn, London EC1





## TOUR OF THE UNIVERSE

Imagine – in the morning mail comes a letter announcing you have won a competition, the first prize an all-expenses-paid trip around the local galaxy. You will spend six months travelling from Earthport across millions of miles of space, visiting strange and wonderful planets along the way. You would think it a hoax if it happened now – but imagine yourself living in the year 2577 and such a letter might not be so crazy.

Leio and Caroline win such a prize and visit in full fabulous colour Jupiter, with overnight stops at Ring City, Ganymede, Pluto, VandeZande's World, Plax and have their first meeting with a living alien civilization, travelling on through dozens of adventures and dangers.

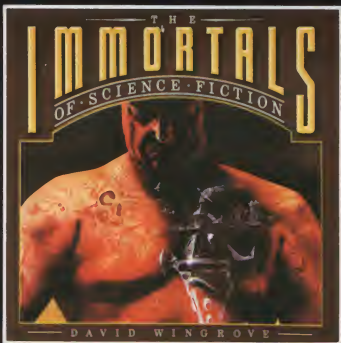
This book is the record of their whole journey. We see the dazzling places in full colour, we see the space craft they travel in, the passports, the immigration forms, the travel brochures, newspaper reports and their diaries of the holiday. Share their adventure of a lifetime!

£7.95 hardcover

## THE IMMORTALS OF SCIENCE FICTION

Amongst the classics of science fiction there are a number of immortal humanoids; people who have become legendary for their character and their contribution to future worlds. The Immortals looks at them with a biographical and visual eye. Susan Calvin from Isaac Asimov's I Robot can be seen in her laboratory building Robby the robot, at home on Thanksgiving Day, and as an old woman with the mature robot beside her. We can see The Illustrated Man, Beowulf Schaeffer, DiGris from Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat and characters from The Philosopher's Stone, Almuric, Glory Road and The Sirens of Titan. The Immortals shows these people in their favourite scenes but also in circumstances that might have occurred outside the novel. Masses of colour and style, The Immortals does for the heroes of SF what Alien Landscapes did for the places.

£5.95 Paperback



To Pierrot Publishing Ltd  
60, Greek Street, London W1V 5LR

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send by return

TOUR OF THE UNIVERSE £7.95 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

FANTASTIC PEOPLE £7.95 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

THE IMMORTALS OF SCIENCE FICTION £5.95 \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

+ 50p per title p&dp

Tick appropriate box

Pierrot Publishing Ltd  
60, Greek Street, London W1V 5LR

To save time and trouble order direct



# PAUL DARROW

JOHN FLEMING INTERVIEWS THE ACTOR WHO PORTRAYS AVON IN THE BBC TV SERIES *BLAKE'S 7*.

**P**aul Darrow was born in Surrey. As a child, he wanted to be a sugar planter because "it seemed terribly romantic". He thinks, perhaps, he saw a film about sugar planting. He used to go to the cinema a lot and eventually decided he wanted to be involved in the film industry in one way or another. The best way to go about that seemed to be to become an actor. So, after education at Heberdasher's Aske's public school, he went to RADA (the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art). After graduating, he worked with repertory companies in this country, went to Canada with a play and toured the Netherlands for six weeks, playing one-night stands as Jimmy Porter, the working-class rabal in *Look Back in Anger*. Darrow appeared in small parts in the cinema movies *The Ragging Moon* (1970) and *Mister Jericho* (1970) and starred as a James Bond figure in the television movie *Port of Secrets* (c. 1972) for Norway's NRK. More recently, he starred in the tele-movie *Drake's Venture* (1980) for Westward Television. But he is best-known as Avon in BBC tv's *Blake's 7* series, a part he has played in 38 episodes over three series.

**Starburst:** The obvious question is are you too strongly identified with Avon?

**Paul Darrow:** No. Someone else asked me if I wasn't typecast as a villain. But, take Shaka-spara. That means I could play Cassius, Iago — you name it — I wouldn't call that typecast. I happen to like playing that type of character and also I was able to develop Avon. You said you like playing "that type" of character. What type?

The type of character that I'm able to develop on my own — the loner, if you like. I can really go anywhere with him, can't I?

**Why did you develop him the way you did?**

The Blake character was very much the straight up-and-down hero, the man in the white hat, and I thought, well, life isn't like that. It isn't like it now; it's certainly not going to be like it in 300 years' time or whenever. So I thought, what is the series about? It's really about survival and, if you look at the Federation as Nazi Germany then we're heroes; if you look at the Federation as Britain, we're the IRA, so we're villains. It's a matter of whatever point of view you happen to have. From Sarvelan's point-of-view, we're terrorists. So I thought, if you're a terrorist, you must behave like one and you must have some kind of commitment. We're living in an era now where we do have that kind of commitment. Whether you agree with it or not doesn't matter, you've got to admire the commitment. So I thought, if he's going to kill somebody, he's going to kill



Paul Darrow as himself.

somebody. It doesn't matter if he shoots them in the back or if they're unarmed — it doesn't matter — he must do it. So I thought I'd play him like that.

**He's an untrustworthy egotist, isn't he?**

No, he's not untrustworthy. If he gives his word, he'll stick by it. It's getting him to give it that's difficult. And I admire that.

**Is that why viewers admire him?**

I think you know where you stand with him. If he does give his word, then he'll back you, as he always did with Blake. He never backed down at the crucial moment. Blake actually had a line. "If we get into a tricky situation, Avon may go, may run". Well no, he wouldn't. In that very episode, Avon was the one who pulled them all out of it. The reason he, the character, didn't get on with Blake was because Blake was a woolly-minded liberal. Blake didn't know what he wanted. "I want to finish the Federation," he says. And Avon says, "And then what?". Who cares? You're never going to stop corruption. You're just going to replace one Federation with another. What I like about Avon is that I am able to keep back quite a lot and let him come out every now and again because the basic storyline is an adventure story.

**What do you mean "keep back quite a lot"?**

Keeping back a lot of his personality.

**Isn't that a bad thing? The audience doesn't know what's going on if you keep him too enigmatic.**

No, because occasionally he does reveal something else. For example, when his girlfriend rolled up, I don't think there was any doubt that he loved her. But what I liked about it was that however much he loved her, she betrayed him, therefore *beng!* He killed her. Very painful, very nasty but very necessary. He's the supreme pragmatist, isn't he?

**Sounds emotionless, though.**

No, that's not emotionless because he loved her. But he's not going to share the pain with anybody else. That's private; that's his business. And the audience finds this attractive.

As an audience, you're objective and you look at the man and say *He is feeling the pain and every now and then, when he's on his own and The Look comes, you can think Oh dear, poor fellow!* And he is a poor fellow. It's a sad situation in which he finds himself but that's tough, that's showbusiness and he's got to fight and he's got to continue and go the way he thinks is right. One of the guest artists said to me: "I love this series because it's the only series that has the courage to have a right bastard as the hero". And I made the point to him as I did to you that he isn't a bastard, he's a wonderful, worm human being. (Laughs) Because, you see, he doesn't think he is a bastard. That's the secret of playing somebody who is apparently unpleasant: that he doesn't think he is.

**What does he think he is?**

He thinks he's just realistic, sensible and, above all, going to come through. He's going to win. They're all playing a game and he's going to win the game. If he can't win the game, he doesn't play.

**What's his background, do you think?**

I did discuss this with Chris Boucher (script editor of the series) and I said, "It's all very well saying we're Earthmen, but where from? It does make a difference — what school you go to and all that sort of thing". And the one remarkable thing I noticed was that the class system still prevails in the future. Avon, if anything, certainly feels himself an elitist and I would imagine, if you look at him in a cliché way, he was probably a Prussian or a South African or very, very aristocratic English. He obviously went to a very good school. He doesn't like people en masse and I personally (laughs) find them a bit frightening, so that wasn't too difficult to play.

**Away from work, you're interested in military history and particularly the Napoleonic era. Why Napoleon?**

He's my kind of man. One of the Blake's 7 fans wrote to me — it's one of the greatest compliments I've been paid — and said, "There's something distinctly Napoleonic about the way you



Above: Paul Darrow as he appeared in the Westward TV tele-movie, *Drake's Venture*. Below left: Paul Darrow in the title role of the BBC trilogy, *The Poisoning of Charles Bravo*. From the second episode *Marital Rights*. Below centre: Another scene from the same episode. With Maureen O'Brien.

play Avon". That was a compliment. Why is he your kind of man?

Because he was a realist. He was able to combine romantic idealism with realism. Somebody once said to him, "We can attack in flank on the Austrian Army but it will mean going through these rather beautiful gardens and destroying them". Napoleon said: "How long will it take you to do it?" And he said something like, "Forty minutes, preserving the gardens". And Napoleon says, "How long will it take not preserving the gardens?" And he says, "Twenty minutes - half the time." So Napoleon says: "Go through the gardens. Win. We can always rebuild the gardens". Which is sensible.

*Very Avonesque.*

Yes, he wouldn't think twice. The actor Audie Murphy, in his book *To Hell And Back*, wrote about when he was in the American Army in Sicily and they suddenly came across two Italian officers riding two magnificent white

horses. They were armed, they came round the corner and the American officer and all his men froze. Murphy went down on one knee and gunned down the Italians and the horses. He had no choice and that was the professional in him. When everybody else froze, those Italians could have blown them to smithereens. So the kind of realism that allows a man to do something like that instinctively - sad though it is to kill beautiful horses - appeals to me. He was the most decorated hero of World War II; he was fascinating. You see, being brought up in the cinema, those are the sort of people I admire. I was brought up on Humphrey Bogart and a situation where men were men and women were women. Now, alright, that's a cliché, but I like that; I don't like all this unisex stuff.

*A lot of people I interview say they were brought up in the front row of the cinema.*

I can do the whole of *The Maltese Falcon* and

*Casablanca* and *Butch Cassidy* and the *Sundance Kid*.

*Casablanca's over-rated.*

(Humphrey Bogart voice) *Casablanca's* a grate movie... And there are lines like "Rick, why did you come to *Casablanca*?" - "I came four de watersh." And Claude Reins says: "But we're in the middle of the desert!" There's a slight pause and Bogie says: "I wash mishinformed!" That's a very witty line and it was written the year I was born. In fact, Chris Boucher and I are both med on films, so I used to say, "Listen, I've remembered a great quote from a great movie - can you slip it in somewhere?" And occasionally he slipped one in. There was one that was a pinch from *Butch Cassidy* where Redford turns to Newman and says, "Stick to thinking, Butch, that's what you're good at." And Chris put that in an episode for me, so I actually turned round to Blake and said it. You'd be surprised the people who pick it up, too. Tanieth Lee wrote some wonderful lines. Steven Pacey (Terrant) had a great long speech to me saying, "I'm better than you, I'm faster than you, I'm younger than you, I'm harder than you; you didn't reckon you'd have any trouble with me but you're gonna have trouble with me!" and so on and so on. And, at the end of all that, I had one line which was pure Humphrey Bogart: "You talk too much."

*Do you get a lot of male fan letters?*

A fair amount, but more from women. The men who write, I suppose, would like to be this sort of a person and I can understand that because so would I. I don't think I am quite him, but it's what I quite admire. If you actually look at the people in films today that do capture the imagination, they are the strong men. And, as I say, I was brought up on them: my favourite actors are people like Marlon Brando, Clint Eastwood. You know where you stand with people like that. John Wayne: no-one knocked over his glass of milk and got away with it. Whatever you think of John Wayne, when you went in to see one of his





pictures, you knew exactly what you were going to get. That, I think, is the most important thing: you must never disappoint. When we get a Blake's 7 script where I don't think the character is treated properly, then I'll complain. Not because I'm trying to be difficult or give myself a better part — you can cut the part out if you want to — but don't give the people what they don't expect, because they're far more intelligent than they're given credit for. That's a fault with writers: they think they have to hit everything over the head with a sledgehammer to explain. Actors are stupid and the audience is stupid, that's the theory. They're not. In fact, the audience tends to know more than the actors—not about a character, but about what's going on. I often get letters saying that, when I said such-and-such a thing, it actually isn't possible. And that's from children.

*Children are very perceptive.*

You can't fool them for a minute. There are two little boys who live over the road — 9 and 11 they are — and one day they said, "What episode are you working on at the moment?" And I was working on the one where the girlfriend rolled up. And the littlest one turned and said to me, "Oh, no-o-o! You don't kiss her, do you?" (Laughs) And then his eyes widened and he said, "I bet I know what you do! You kill her, don't you? You would!" That redeemed me in his eyes. And, of course, that's exactly what Avon did. We had this one episode where Avon met his only friend in the Universe. And David Maloney (the producer; see interview in *Starburst* 18) said "Don't worry — You kill him on the last page!" So I've killed my only friend in the Universe and I've also killed my only love in the Universe. It's wonderful, isn't it? Where's he going to go?

*The new producer is Vere Lorrimer. Are you going to be in the new series?*

As far as I know. What's happened at the moment is that Vere's rung us all up personally to say, "We are thinking of a fourth series and would you be interested in doing it?" Then it's



Above: From the first season of Blake's 7, the original crew of the Liberator. Below: Paul Darrow rests between takes on the set of Blake's 7. Bottom: Avon (Paul Darrow) levels a blaster at Tynus (Ronald Lacey) in the episode Killer from the second series of Blake's 7.

a question of what's going to happen in it — where's it going to go? I think it has to develop and that's part of its appeal. We've lost four of the Seven — five if you count the Liberator. We've lost the Liberator, Zen, Blake, Jenna and Gan. That's quite a change, really. Now we've got a situation where really Avon is in charge, isn't he?

*Yes, what do you think he felt about old softie-liberal Blake?*

I think he really admired the commitment — we were talking about commitment earlier on — and that's why he stuck with Blake to a certain extent. Also, he had nowhere else to go. As he made quite clear halfway through the second series, Blake could have what he wanted but what he (Avon) wanted was the Liberator and eventually he got it.

*It was really a case of "This spaceship isn't big enough for both of us".*

Yes, what happened at the end of the second





Above: Paul Darrow in the role that has made him a household name: Avon in *Blake's 7*. Right: Paul Darrow played the Sheriff of Nottingham in the 1975 BBC tv series *The Legend of Robin Hood*.



series — we discussed this quite carefully — was that, as far as the personalities were concerned, one of those characters had to go: Blake or Avon. I used to expect an episode to arrive on my desk entitled *Showdown* or *Gunfight at Jupiter Junction* or something and it would be Blake and Avon saying "I've had enough — This is where you get yours". Gareth (*Thomas, who played Blake*) expected that too. But, in fact, what happened was that Gareth got a good offer to go to the Royal Shakespeare Company and he said "I don't want to go on playing the straight up-and-down hero". He was... I think you can quote that... I don't think he was happy. I think he'd agree.

*It was a boring part — having to play the man in the white hat.*  
And it wasn't his fault. He's actually quite good, you know. But the character had to be "morally sound" all the way through. When the third series started, David Maloney said to me "What we're going to do is introduce a streak of morality into Avon". Well, I said, "Oh no, no, you mustn't do that!" But he said, "No, we're going to". And I thought, well, if they introduce a streak of morality in him, I can play it in such a way that it looks as though he's a moral; so I left it at that. An actor can do all sorts of things: you can say the phrase "I love you" in 9000 different ways. What was good about the

series was that there was a marvellous balance between everybody and we all got on well. There was very little hassle among the actors: once or twice we obviously got a bit annoyed but, generally speaking, it was pretty good. Josette Simon (*Deyna*) was straight out of drama school. I saw her recently and she'd been to do an episode in another tv series, which must be nameless, and she said, "I had the most horrendous time. I thought everything was going to be like *Blake's 7*, but it isn't. It was awful. They didn't speak to me, they were rude when they did speak and it was dreadful." She hated it — it was so unlike *Blake's 7*.

*Because Blake's 7 is science fiction, though, people may not treat it seriously. The "Oh it's only kids' stuff attitude."*

They originally called it a "kidult" series. Usually the problem with science fiction is that it's weighted towards plot and ideas at the expense of psychology.

Well, this is where *Blake's 7* was probably successful and this is perhaps why the characters are as popular as they seem to be. The emphasis on character — whether it came from the writers or the actors themselves — was such that it created a deeper interest. People care about the characters and that's important. When I get fan letters, okay, some of them are admiring, some silly, some charming but the

majority are fairly reasonable and intelligent and say *I care about this character*. Now that's marvellous for an actor, marvellous, because it means you've achieved something. The fact that it's in science fiction doesn't mean it's any less good than if it were in Shakespeare. I've seen some pretty bad performances in Shakespeare that we wouldn't have had in *Blake's 7*.

*You seem to have some loyal fans.*

They make you what you are. I loathe some people's attitude. There are one or two people, who shall be nameless, that I know very well who ignore letters and despise people who write in and I feel like thumping actors who say, "No, I don't bother: I throw them straight in the wastepaper basket." I think if people take the trouble to write, you should reply. Without them, you're not going to get anywhere. I just wish some of the fans knew which people these were so that they didn't support them any more and they wouldn't get the work. I feel very strongly about the relationship you have with the people who watch you. That's why I go to science fiction conventions, because that's part of my job.

*You won a Starburst award last year. It's hardly an Oscar, though, is it?*

Alright, it isn't Hollywood and it isn't an Academy Award, but it is an award and somebody somewhere has gone to a lot of trouble to think about it and a lot of people have gone to a lot of trouble — if you count the stamps at 10p or 12p each — to write in and say who they like, so I can stand up there on the day and be feted and given an award. That means a lot; it means more than I've been able to convey in



Above: A scene from the first episode of the BBC tv trilogy *The Poisoning of Charles Bravo*, with Darrow as Bravo and Maureen O'Brien as his wife Florence. Left: Paul Darrow as Charles Bravo.

what I've just said. And that Starburst Award I won has pride-of-place in my home. That's the reward, the contact with the audience, which you don't get on television: in the theatre you get it because you get the applause at the end. And it's marvellous and I love it.

*Especially from children?*

A nine year-old sent me a script. It was very funny, because it said SCENE ONE: Avon and Blaka and Villa teleport down on the planet. SCENE TWO: They arrive on the planet. Avon says, "I don't like the look of this place". Blaka says, "Neither do I — Let's go back". That was the end of the script. I thought that was hilarious. What a great idea for a gag.

*Is writing something you'd like to get into yourself?*

Yes, I would. If an actor does a particular character for any length of time, he gets to know that character better than anybody else. You also get to know how that character reacts with other characters and consequently you know more about the other characters than perhaps a lot of people.

*So maybe you should write a Blake's 7 episode.* I wouldn't mind, actually. The only trouble is that, if you write for yourself, everybody says, "Oh dear me! He's just writing so that he looks that much better!" So that's a dodgy thing. I'd probably have to write it for another character, so they wouldn't be able to say that. But then you defeat the object of the exercise because your character's the one you know about, so ... A lot depends on the writers, actually. Chris Boucher was very much on the right wavelength

for this kind of thing. Terry Nation's [see interview in *Starburst 6*] original idea was a good one. And then they got in one or two other interesting writers.

*Like Tanith Lee. As well as writing for Blake's 7, she wrote the radio play The Silver Sky which you starred in.*

I did that because she wrote it. I didn't even read the script before accepting because I didn't need to. She writes well and it was a marvellous part; I think it calls out to be televised. It's a love story set in a time-war. And these two people, who come from two different areas of time, meet and fall in love and then are destroyed. She is destroyed physically; he is destroyed as far as personality is concerned, because he suddenly realises everything's worthless.

*You haven't done much radio.*

No.

*But, during the breaks in Blake's 7, you've appeared in stage plays.*

Yes, it's to keep my hand in, really, because they're different techniques.

*What's the difference?*

Well, projection (of the voice) for one. With a microphone, you can be quite quiet; in the theatre, you've got to convey a quiet emotion loudly. So it's a different technique. Also a live audience means sustaining a performance with a

beginning, a middle and an end — in television, of course, it's all shot out of continuity.

*But the money's better in television.*

(Laughs) Well, I was about to say money's not important but, of course, it is. As long as you get a fair whack, as long as it's a reasonable amount to live on. But the BBC, you see, is faced with all sorts of cutbacks. Actually, I must put in a plug for the special effects boys. Having mentioned money and cutbacks, that's the kind of department that is faced with them and what those boys do with limited resources is amazing. It is staggering. [See interviews in *Starburst 17*, 20, 21.] They come in and they say, "We've made this gun for you" or "this bomb for you" and it's a working model! It works! They're marvellous.

*Ian Scoones used to do the Blake's 7 effects and now he's off to do the House of Hammer series for ITC.*

Yes, I'm in one of those. All about vestal virgins being sacrificed on the altar, so I'm going to spend most of my days sitting among a group of beautiful girls — It's going to be terribly difficult, isn't it?

*Keeping up your image.*

(Laughs) What image? Avon never got the girl. I'd quite like it if he did once in a while, but then I don't think they'd cast Raquel Welch would they?

# CARRIE

With *The Shining* receiving saturation release and *Dressed to Kill* repeating its American box office success in this country it seems appropriate to look back at an earlier feature which has links with both films.

## Feature by Phil Edwards

**C**arrie was Stephen King's first published novel although it was written *after* his second, *Salem's Lot*. Brian De Palma became interested in *Carrie* in 1975 and began negotiations for the film rights. He discovered that 20th Century-Fox had secured the book for producer Paul Monash. After some initial reservations, Monash chose De Palma as director.

De Palma then set about choosing the actress to play the telekinetic teenager, Carrie. At the same time, George Lucas was screen testing for actors for *Star Wars* and the two directors worked together on the tests for the two films. For *Carrie*, which required two other girls in major parts, actresses were tested in groups, each girl reading for each part in turn.

One of the girls tested was a young Texan actress Sissy Spacek, who had won critical acclaim for her role in Terrence Malicks' *Badlands* in 1973. In 1974, she had auditioned for the lead in De Palma's rock horror film *Phantom of the Paradise*. Although she was not selected for that role, she did work on the film as a set decorator with her production designer husband, Jack Fisk. Fisk had also been production designer for *Badlands* and had begun designing De Palma's *Obsession*, but left that production after differences with the film's producer.

De Palma was won over by Sissy's portrayal of the gawky schoolgirl, discovering not only her emerging womanhood but also the awareness of her psychic powers.

The group tests also filled several other parts. Steven Spielberg's longtime girl friend, Amy Irving, was cast as Sue Snell, one of the few to survive Carrie's psychic onslaught in the film's blood-drenched climax. Nancy Allen played Chris Hargenson, Carrie's bitchy classmate. Both ladies would feature further in De Palma's work and life. Amy Irving starred in the much underrated *The Fury* and Nancy Allen went on to star in *Dressed to Kill* and to become *Mrs De Palma*.



Above: Carrie (Sissy Spacek) is drenched with pig's blood by her school "friends" at the *Prom Night*. Opposite top: Piper Laurie plays Carrie's fanatical mother. Opposite centre: Stabbed by her mother after returning from the *Prom Night*, Carrie cowers in a corner. Opposite below: Carrie's mother comforts her daughter after stabbing her.

For the important role of Carrie's mother, De Palma chose Piper Laurie, a leading lady from several fifties Universal historical romances. Rather than have Carrie's psychotic mother played as some kind of wicked witch, De Palma decided that the part required a handsome

woman, thereby underlining the sexual repression within the character.

Carrie's doomed partner for the senior prom was played by William Katt, son of Barbara Hale, *Perry Mason*'s faithful secretary, Della Street. Not much was heard of Katt after *Carrie*, although he





went on to play Butch Cassidy in the ill fated *Butch and Sundance — The Early Days*. The other male role in *Carrie* was taken by John Travolta, fresh from his tv success in *Welcome Back Kotter*.

Although *Carrie's* success as a great horror film rests with Brian De Palma, much of the film's artistic achievement is the work of production designer, Jack Fisk. It was Fisk's idea that at the end of the film when Carrie returns home after the disastrous school prom and finally destroys her mother, the house should sink into the ground. Originally De Palma had wanted Carrie's home to be by the sea to allow Carrie to walk along the wet sand and be swallowed up by it. Fisk convinced him otherwise. To achieve the effect, Fisk had a half size model built and installed on an elevator contraption. Down went the elevator, house included, giving a thoroughly realistic effect.

*Carrie* is a film heavily laden with mechanical effects which were handled by Greg Auer, who had worked with De Palma and Fisk on *Phantom of the Paradise*. *Carrie* required a lot of fire effects for the prom sequence and most of these were achieved using runner pipes fed by a propane gas tank. With Carrie's powers in full swing at the prom the effect of fire hoses unravelling and spraying water about was also required. When the hoses first unravelled they were operated by overhead wires, but once the water started to flow, a different system was used. Each hose had a pipe inserted in it which allowed the water to continue spraying and left flexibility in them for Auer and his assistants to manipulate them off camera.

One of the more gory highlights of *Carrie* is the death of Piper Laurie, as Carrie's uncontrolled anger lets fly and causes an assortment of kitchen utensils to pin her to the wall. Auer constructed a special vest for Piper Laurie which she wore under her costume. Into the vest were built 'hit' pads where the knives, vegetable peelers and other assorted sharp instruments would hit. As each utensil was run in on a wire, the wire was removed and the permanent knife left in place.

Of course, the one scene in *Carrie* that everybody remembers and talks of is the dream scene ending, and of course the super-scare finish rated by many the most effective shock ever committed to celluloid. To achieve the dreamlike effect, De Palma had Amy Irving walk backwards and then printed the take in reverse. If one watches the scene carefully, one can actually see a car driving down the street backwards. As for the shock ending? Well, despite the fact that *Carrie* is now four years old and is already considered a classic of fantasy cinema, there are some of you out there who probably still haven't seen it. It would be best to let the inspired Brian De Palma show you. ●



# AN INTERVIEW WITH

**A**rthur C. Clarke is unquestionably today's foremost science fiction and science fact writer. His books and novels are legion, he was Stanley Kubrick's right-hand man on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and over the past several weeks he has been presenting a fascinating weekly television series, *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World* in which he's expounded on UFOs, Nessie, frogs falling from heaven and strange fireballs from the sky.

It seemed appropriate that I should meet this famous writer in the house of another great writer, Oscar Wilde, in St. James's Place in London. Naturally, Oscar no longer abides there. It's now the property of Collins Publishers, who have published a book called *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World* (price £8.95). It's written by Simon Welfare and John

Fairley although Arthur supervised the whole thing and has commented on each of the mysteries. It's lavishly illustrated with colour and black and white pictures, and is a boon for any Arthur C. Clarke fan because he no longer writes as now, at 62, he is retired. Yet, he remains a very busy man.

The television series was conceived two years ago when Yorkshire Television asked him to list some of his favourite mysteries from his files which he's accumulated over the past thirty years.

While the film unit travelled the world capturing awesome sights such as the total eclipse in India, Arthur remained in his beloved Sri Lanka which he refuses to leave unless it's for something very special and then only for a maximum of three weeks. Although he did go with them to India because, "it was a sight I couldn't

afford to miss and not too far from home."

Promoting the book and the tv series was one of those special instances that had brought him to London this time.

"Plus I want to catch up on all the films that don't get released in Sri Lanka," he said.

Arthur, known as the Space Prophet, is a great film fan and naturally his favourite kind of film is of the science fiction kind. "I've seen *Star Wars* four times and will probably want to see it every few years. *The Empire Strikes Back* I wasn't so keen on but I may see it a second time just for its technical virtuosity.

"I'm sorry I missed *The Black Hole* but I have some of it on Super 8. While the story seems silly, that meteorite coming down the ship, though utterly ridiculous, looked tremendous. So long as

Below left: A space shuttle orbits high above the surface of the moon. Below centre: A detailed shot of the Jupiter probe *Discovery*. Below: Astronaut Poole (Gary Lockwood) at the controls of the *Discovery* "life boat" pod. 2001: *A Space Odyssey*.





# ARTHUR C. CLARKE

I'm entertained."

"Did you like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*? considering its very serious approach?" I asked.

"I was annoyed with the film because I'm annoyed with anyone who takes flying saucers that seriously. Nevertheless, it did have some very good moments and the ending was superb. I'm looking forward to seeing the revised version."

"Did you feel that communicating by music with the aliens was feasible?"

"Well, that's how dolphins do it. Though I don't know if one could communicate very much in that way. When you think about how alien oriental music is to us, could you communicate to a Chinaman or a Japanese or even an Indian?"

It comes as no surprise to learn that his very favourite is 2001: A Space

*Odyssey*, the screenplay of which he co-wrote with Kubrick and followed it up with perhaps his best novel based on the film.

"I have a 16mm print which I like to see once a year and it's always visually inexhaustable."

I asked Arthur how he became involved with his first and only major motion picture.

"Stanley wrote to me saying he wanted to do a science fiction movie and did I have any ideas. I was working for *Time-Life* at the time so I moonlighted with Stanley and he went through all my short stories. Eventually he chose one called *The Sentinel* and used that as his basis. Nothing was left of the original story except for there being something on the moon like a fire alarm. Then the two of us tossed ideas back and forth for

months.

"I couldn't say how we wrote the script. In fact, I never even saw a script until the film was finished. All I saw were piles of multi-coloured bits of paper with different versions of scenes. It was all very improvised.

"I vividly remember walking back to the studio having watched *Moonwatcher*, the ape-man, smashing things up on what was the only location which was just outside the studio. He was up on a platform filmed at a high angle so you wouldn't see the buses going by!

"And as we walked back Stanley for some reason or another had this broomstick that he started tossing into the air, and I felt sure it would fall on his head.

"Then he told someone to get some bones and throw them in the air, and he filmed them turning over, and that

Above left: A space shuttle lands on the moon and is lowered beneath the lunar surface. Above centre: The astronauts descend the ramp to Tycho base where scientists have uncovered a mysterious black monolith. Above right: A moon bus skims across the lunar landscape. 2001: A Space Odyssey.





*"I couldn't say how we wrote the script for 2001. In fact, I never even saw a script until the film was finished."*



*"I was annoyed with Close Encounters because I'm annoyed with anyone who takes flying saucers that seriously."*



*"I have about four books which are probably going to be turned into films which I'm very excited about."*

became the 'jump cut' when the bone turns into a space craft.

"I was away from home for a couple of years on that but never again.

"I'm very fond of Stanley and we've often talked about doing another film but the problem is I won't leave Sri Lanka and he won't fly."

Arthur is a man who spitiars his words and before I could ask the next question he quickly said, "Incidentally, I'm now a film star. James Pierce, who is

**"Some Hollywood producer phoned me to write the actual screenplay. He was very upset when I told him no."**

our only notable Singalese director, has always wanted to film Leonard Woolf's novel about Ceylon life called *The Village in the Jungle*. When I heard he was finally making it I volunteered to play the part of Woolf.

"It was filmed in a very large room where Woolf actually sat as judge in 1910 and it was very strange to sit there at the bench in my robes and to see the view exactly how he described it in the book."

"Would you like to act again?" I asked "I only do these sort of things once."

Arthur isn't even interested in writing



any more screenplays but he has written an outline for a new science fiction movie, called *The Songs of Distant Earth*.

"Some Hollywood producer phoned me to write the actual screenplay. He was very upset when I told him, No, but if you get someone to write it and he's willing to come out to Sri Lanka I'll be happy to talk about it with him.

"I have about four books which are probably going to be turned into films which I'm very excited about. Universal

**"If anyone gives Stanley Kubrick 50 million dollars to make a science fiction film and we were able to get together . . ."**

already have a very good screenplay of *Childhood's End* which is I think my best book next to 2001."

Will he never consider writing an original screenplay again?

Cautiously he replied, "Well, let's say that if anyone gives Stanley Kubrick 50 million dollars to make a science fiction film and we were able to get together . . . I

"But I'd only come away from Sri Lanka for a couple of months . . . and I wouldn't do that for anyone else."

**Interview by Anthony Paul**





NOW... IN EVERY ISSUE OF

# MARVEL

## SUPERHEROES

## CHAMPIONS

\*HERCULES\* THE ANGEL\* BLACK WIDOW\*  
\*ICEMAN\* GHOST RIDER\*

## X-MEN

\*CYCLOPS\* MARVEL GIRL\* THE BEAST\*  
\*PROFESSOR XAVIER\* THE ANGEL\*  
\*ICEMAN\*

## THE MIGHTY

## AVENGERS

\*SCARLET WITCH\* THE WASP\* THOR\*  
\*YELLOW JACKET\* CAPTAIN AMERICA\*  
\*IRON MAN\* THE BEAST\*

From out of the depths  
of the hyborian age

**A COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE  
MOST SAVAGE TALES OF WARRIORS  
AND WIZARDRY EVER TOLD!**

FEATURING THE AWESOME ADVENTURES OF

# conan the cimmerian

AS HE BATTLES FOR SURVIVAL IN A BARBARIC WORLD!

PLUS BONUS STORIES FEATURING  
RED SONJA, THE SHE-DEVIL WITH A SWORD  
SOLOMON KANE, PURITAN ADVENTURER  
AND KULL THE DESTROYER

The **SAVAGE SWORD** of  
**CONAN**

ON SALE EVERY MONTH!



# MAYA MERCHANDISING

## SPECIALISTS IN SCIENCE FICTION, HORROR AND FANTASY

Please make all cheques and postal orders payable to MAYA MERCHANDISING — orders from outside the United Kingdom (including Eire) should be paid for by International Money Order or Bank Draft — in sterling. All orders are packed with cardboard wherever possible and are processed as quickly as possible but please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Please confirm you are over 18 when ordering items designated 'Adults Only'. All books are softcover unless otherwise stated.

**STARLOG PHOTO GUIDEBOOKS** Each contains rare photo's (many in full colour) and valuable reference data. All are 11" x 8 1/2".

**FANTASTIC WORLDS** The grand tour taking you through 70 years of TV and movie productions, visiting such worlds as Mongo (Flash Gordon), Krypton (Superman), Metaltuna (This Island Earth), and many more. 96 pages with over 200 stills. **£3.90**

**ROBOTS** Get acquainted with the all-time favourites, including Robby from *Forbidden Planet*, the robots from Fritz Lang's classic *Metropolis*, R2D2 and C3PO from *Star Wars* and the robot from *Lost in Space*, plus many more. Also included is an extensive visual guide, with credit information, and a plot synopsis of every movie and TV show that featured a robot. 96 pages with over 100 stills. **£4.35**

**SCIENCE FICTION ALIENS** The Alien, the stranger from the stars — mysterious, heroic, dangerous. An A-Z book of aliens from 1900 through TV, *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 'a' who, *Invaders from Mars*, and other information, and a plot synopsis of every movie and TV show that featured a robot. 96 pages with over 100 stills. **£3.75**

**SCIENCE FICTION HEROES** A colourful review of some of the heroic gents taken from science fiction's classic movies and TV shows. 32 pages with over 60 photo's and illustrations. **£2.55**

**SCIENCE FICTION VILLAINS** A rogues gallery of mad geniuses and thugs the likes of which can only be found in the fantastic world of sci-fi. 32 pages with more than 70 stills. **£2.55**

**SCIENCE FICTION WEAPONS VOLUME 1** Science fiction has created hundreds of unique and bizarre weapons of war. This book explains how many of them might actually work, how they were designed (detailed blueprints), the operating theory behind each one and the possible effect of the weapon. 36 pages with over 100 photo's. **£2.55**

**SPACE ART** Features more than 100 colour reproductions of the best in the field. The works of 65 master artists, Chas. Bonestell, Bob McCall, Norman Rockwell, Jamie Wyeth plus many more, provide an appreciation of art that only our universe can inspire. **£3.80**

Also available in a deluxe slipcase edition. **£10.00**  
**SPACESHIPS** The little book that started it all! Starlog Press' first release features what many science fiction enthusiasts love the most — space hardware! From the earliest classic designs to current ships and TV shows. 32 pages with more than 100 stills. **£1.95**

**SPACESHIPS — NEW ENLARGED EDITION** This new edition is an incredible collection of rare photo's — sure to be essential for every science fiction movie fan. It covers literally every spaceship that ever appeared in any movie or TV show — from Flash Gordon and *Things to Come* through the hot new blockbusters *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Black Hole* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. 96 pages with over 170 photo's. **£3.00**

**SPECIAL EFFECTS VOLUME 1** A divided into six chapters describing the art of workshops, construction and design of all classics, miniature worlds in the making, earthquakes in miniature, animating model creatures and hardware (reads the submarine *Nautilus* from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and the C-57D from *Forbidden Planet*). 96 pages with over 100 photo's. **£4.35**

**SPECIAL EFFECTS VOLUME 2** Following on the heels of the enormously popular first edition, this new volume explores matte painting, glass shots, animators, makeup and much more! All new subjects not covered in volume 1. 96 pages with more than 170 photo's and illustrations. **£4.90**

also available.

**SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK VOLUME 1** A historic volume that chronicles the events of 1978 throughout the world of science fiction. It is divided into 5 sections: news (covering all aspects of the field of sci-fi literature, film, recording, TV, conventions, publications and special events), art & artists, awards, the fan field and perspectives. 112 pages with over 100 photo's and illustrations. **£2.65**

### MAGAZINES

**CINEFAX A** US publication devoted to in-depth coverage of movie special effects. 8" x 9", 68 pages in full colour. 1 *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director Douglas Trumbull. *Alien* — detailed discussion by Ridley Scott, R.H. Giger, Dan O'Bannon, Brian Johnson, Rick Alder, Carlo Rambaldi, Roger Dozier, Michael Seymour and others on their involvement in the designs and special effects. **£4.45**



2. *The Empire Strikes Back* — interview with special supervisor Richard Edlund, Greg Jein — model maker. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — John Dykstra interview. **£2.30**

**FUTURE LIFE**  
21. *Shylock* — Interview with director John Huston. **£1.95**  
22. *Star Wars* — Interview with George Lucas. **£1.95**  
23. *The Empire Strikes Back* — interview with special supervisor Richard Edlund, Greg Jein — model maker. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — John Dykstra interview. **£2.30**

**FAMOUS MONSTERS**  
168. *Movie robots*. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* — The Special Edition. *Gorgo*: movie aliens. *Jaws*: TV sci-fi. **£1.50**

**STARBURST**  
25. *The Blood Spattered Bride*; *The Empire Strikes Back* — interviews with producer Gary Kurtz and director Irvin Kershner. *Salem's Lot*; *Popeye*; the films of Jack Arnold. *Galaxia*, *Captain Quantum* — physics super-hero, digital recording: the space art of Ludek Pesek. **£1.25**

**FAMOUS MONSTERS**  
168. *Movie robots*. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* — The Special Edition. *Gorgo*: movie aliens. *Jaws*: TV sci-fi. **£1.50**

**STARBURST**  
25. *The Blood Spattered Bride*; *The Empire Strikes Back* — interviews with producer Gary Kurtz and director Irvin Kershner. *Salem's Lot*; *Popeye*; the films of Jack Arnold. *Galaxia*, *Captain Quantum* — physics super-hero, digital recording: the space art of Ludek Pesek. **£1.25**

**STARLOG**  
37. *The Empire Strikes Back* — Harrison Ford interview with John Williams (soundtrack composer), behind the scenes on *Back Rogers* in the 25th Century. *Battle Beyond the Stars* — interview with Tim O'Connor. *Star Trek* — retrospective. *Doctor Who* — script editor (and author) Terrance Dicks interview. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director James Cameron. **£1.95**

**STARLOG**  
37. *The Empire Strikes Back* — Harrison Ford interview with John Williams (soundtrack composer), behind the scenes on *Back Rogers* in the 25th Century. *Battle Beyond the Stars* — interview with Tim O'Connor. *Star Trek* — retrospective. *Doctor Who* — script editor (and author) Terrance Dicks interview. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director James Cameron. **£1.95**

**STARLOG**  
37. *The Empire Strikes Back* — Harrison Ford interview with John Williams (soundtrack composer), behind the scenes on *Back Rogers* in the 25th Century. *Battle Beyond the Stars* — interview with Tim O'Connor. *Star Trek* — retrospective. *Doctor Who* — script editor (and author) Terrance Dicks interview. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director James Cameron. **£1.95**

**STARLOG**  
37. *The Empire Strikes Back* — Harrison Ford interview with John Williams (soundtrack composer), behind the scenes on *Back Rogers* in the 25th Century. *Battle Beyond the Stars* — interview with Tim O'Connor. *Star Trek* — retrospective. *Doctor Who* — script editor (and author) Terrance Dicks interview. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director James Cameron. **£1.95**

**STARLOG**  
37. *The Empire Strikes Back* — Harrison Ford interview with John Williams (soundtrack composer), behind the scenes on *Back Rogers* in the 25th Century. *Battle Beyond the Stars* — interview with Tim O'Connor. *Star Trek* — retrospective. *Doctor Who* — script editor (and author) Terrance Dicks interview. *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* — interview with director James Cameron. **£1.95**

### SOFTCOVER CINEMA BOOKS

**REFERENCE GUIDE TO FANTASY FILMS** (Lee) The most comprehensive index of genre films available! Each volume is packed with information including cast & production credits, brief plot synopses and much more. All three books are 11" x 8 1/2", and illustrated. **£4.80**

**VOLUME 1: A-F** — 240 pages. **£8.55**  
**VOLUME 2: G-O** — 272 pages. **£8.75**  
**VOLUME 3: P-Z** — 292 pages. **£8.75**  
All three volumes. **£24.70**

**HEROES OF THE HORRORS** (Beck) The careers of Lon Chaney Sr, Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Lon Chaney Jr and Vincent Price. Contains an extensive filmography for each star and almost 500 photographs and posters (many rarely seen). 10 1/2" x 7 1/8" pages. **£5.80**

**FILM FANTASY SCRAPBOOK** (Harrison) This spectacular volume will delight all those who have been fascinated by the range of monsters, creatures and special effects created by Ray Harryhausen and his late mentor, Willis O'Brien. Included are nearly 300 original drawings and rare photographs. 12" x 8 1/2", 146 pages plus 6 in full colour. **£10.55**

Also available in hardcover. **£10.55**

**THE BLACK HOLE POSTER BOOK** 22 full colour posters, plus a blueprint of the Palomino, re-create the spectacle and suspense of *The Black Hole*. 9 1/2" x 13 1/2", 48 pages. **£2.25**

**A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION FILMS** (Rowan) An excellent reference guide to sci-fi films from 1902 onward. Over 350 photo's. 10 1/2" x 8 1/2", 240 pages. **£5.80**

Also available in hardcover. **£12.85**

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our subscription service is an ideal way of ensuring that you get each issue of your favourite magazine. All our copies are mailed out protected by cardboard — as are all our orders — to ensure that your copy reaches you in good condition. Why not treat a friend — or even yourself — to one for Christmas? Subscriptions are for one year and are available on.

**CINEFAX 3 issues p.a.** **£6.80**  
**CINEFAX 6 issues p.a.** **£12.80**  
**FAMOUS MONSTERS 10 issues p.a.** **£14.30**  
**FANGORIA 6 issues p.a.** **£7.15**  
**FANTASTIC FILMS 8 issues p.a.** **£7.45**  
**FUTURE LIFE 5 issues p.a.** **£5.25**  
**HEAVY METAL 12 issues p.a.** **£16.80**  
**DIAGRAM 4 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 8 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 12 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 16 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 20 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 24 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 28 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 32 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 36 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 40 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 44 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 48 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 52 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 56 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 60 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 64 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 68 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 72 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 76 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 80 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 84 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 88 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 92 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 96 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 100 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 104 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 108 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 112 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 116 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 120 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 124 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 128 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 132 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 136 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 140 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 144 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 148 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 152 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 156 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 160 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 164 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 168 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 172 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 176 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 180 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 184 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 188 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 192 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 196 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 200 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 204 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 208 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 212 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 216 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 220 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 224 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 228 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 232 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 236 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 240 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 244 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 248 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 252 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 256 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 260 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 264 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 268 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 272 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 276 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 280 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 284 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 288 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 292 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 296 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 300 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 304 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 308 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 312 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 316 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 320 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 324 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 328 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 332 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 336 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 340 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 344 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 348 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 352 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 356 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 360 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 364 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 368 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 372 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 376 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 380 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 384 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 388 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 392 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 396 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 400 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 404 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 408 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 412 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 416 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 420 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 424 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 428 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 432 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 436 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 440 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 444 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 448 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 452 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 456 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 460 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 464 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 468 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 472 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 476 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 480 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 484 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 488 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 492 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 496 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 500 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 504 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 508 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 512 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 516 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 520 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 524 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 528 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 532 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 536 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 540 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 544 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 548 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 552 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 556 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 560 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 564 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 568 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 572 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 576 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 580 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 584 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 588 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 592 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 596 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 600 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 604 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 608 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 612 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 616 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 620 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 624 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 628 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 632 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 636 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 640 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 644 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 648 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 652 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 656 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 660 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 664 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 668 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 672 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 676 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 680 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 684 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 688 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 692 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 696 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 700 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 704 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 708 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 712 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 716 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 720 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 724 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 728 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 732 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 736 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 740 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 744 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 748 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 752 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 756 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 760 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 764 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 768 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 772 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 776 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 780 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 784 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 788 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 792 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 796 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 800 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 804 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 808 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 812 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 816 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 820 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 824 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 828 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 832 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 836 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 840 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 844 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 848 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 852 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 856 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 860 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 864 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 868 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 872 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 876 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 880 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 884 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 888 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 892 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 896 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 900 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 904 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 908 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 912 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 916 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 920 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 924 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 928 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 932 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 936 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 940 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 944 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 948 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 952 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 956 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 960 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 964 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 968 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 972 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 976 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 980 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 984 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 988 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 992 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 996 issues only** **£10.40**  
**DIAGRAM 1000 issues only** **£10.40**

**ALIEN** (Foster) Novelisation of the movie — includes 8 pages of concept art. **£1.35**

**ALIEN MOVIE NOVEL** The story retold using over 1000 full colour stills plus original dialogue. 10 1/2" x 8 1/2", 108 pages. **£1.95**

**ALIEN POSTER MAG** 16 pages full colour pages folding out to a giant 34" x 22" poster. **£1.95**

**ALIEN POSTER MAG** 16 pages full colour pages folding out to a giant 34" x 22" poster. **£1.95</**

# 66 STEPHEN ROAD, BARKING, BEXLEYHEATH, KENT DA7 6EE

## TELEPHONE: CRAYFORD (29) 53853

SHOP: THE EDGE OF FOREVER, 54, BELLEFROUSE ROAD, WELLING, KENT DA 16 3PY TELEPHONE: (01) 301 3772

**SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK — REVISED** (de Camp & de Camp) A guide to writing imaginative literature afterglow the apprentice writer an overview of the problems and pleasures of writing imaginative fiction and teaching him the many and varied skills such writing requires. 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 228 pages Hardcover **£5.30**

**THE ALIEN WORLD: THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE** (Eisner) The first sensible treatise on the fictitious world of expanding and contracting galaxies and their alien worlds. Illustrated with 90 full colour paintings by well-known artists including Chris Moore, Boris, Eddie Jones, Angus McKie etc. 10 1/2" x 9 1/2" 96 pages Hardcover **£5.00**

**Bumper Christmas selection!**  
To avoid disappointment,  
please ensure that your  
Christmas orders reach us by  
the 10th December to enable us  
to process them by 18th  
December.

### EXCLUSIVE!!!

We are currently Britain's only stockists of Starlog's **SPACE ART PRINTS**. Each full colour print was specially commissioned by Starlog and is produced in a limited edition — on high quality, textured paper.

- SA1: Space Station 2000 by Bob McCall — 18" x 24" **£5.50 each**
- SA2: Exploring Titan by Ron Miller — 18" x 24" **£5.50 each**
- SA3: The Dream Fulfilled by Vincent Di Arle — 24" x 18" **£5.50 each**
- SA4: Duststorm on Mars by Luke Pesek — 18" x 24" **£5.50 each**



### STAR TREK

**STAR TREK SPACEFLIGHT CHRONOLOGY** (Goldstein & Goldstein) The history and development of space flight from Sputnik 1 to the USS Enterprise. Packed with information and fully illustrated by Rick Sternbach. 11" x 8 1/2", 192 pages — over 40 full colour plates. **£5.30**

**THE OFFICIAL BLUEPRINTS OF STAR TREK — THE MOTION PICTURE** The new USS Enterprise and bridge, the Klingon cruiser, the Vulcan shuttle and much more. 32 views in all! Set of 14 — each 10 1/2" x 19" — in wallet. **£4.00**

**STAR TREK — THE MOTION PICTURE PEEL-OFF GRAPHICS BOOK** (Cole) Over 50 emboss to decorate your walls, posters or books — includes Kirk, Spock & his uniform, insignias, the Klingon cruiser emblem, phaser logos, the official Federation seal and more! 12" x 8 1/2", 24 pages — most in full colour. **£5.95**

**STAR TREK — THE MOTION PICTURE MAKE YOUR OWN COSTUME BOOK** (Schumberger) The clothing and jewellery etc of Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Ilia, Uhura and some of the alien and civilisations from the movie will come easy with this book. 11" x 8 1/2", 126 pages (8 in full colour). **£5.95**

**STAR TREK STAR FLEET MEDICAL REFERENCE MANUAL** (Palestine) The complete texts as used by Star Fleet personnel. Fully illustrated. 11" x 8 1/2", 160 pages. **£4.80**

**STAR TREK BLUEPRINTS** Every foot of the USS Enterprise built to exact scale in exact detail. Set of 12 — each 9" x 30" — in wallet. **£3.00**

**A STAR TREK CATALOG** (Turnbull) Tell the what, why and where to get it guide to the whole fantastic world of Star Trek! There's much more to it than you think — this is the ultimate guide to the Star Trek phenomenon! 10 1/2" x 8 1/2", 160 pages with over 150 photo's & illustrations. **£3.80**

**STAR TREK STAR FLEET TECHNICAL MANUAL** (Joseph) This is for the specific use of Star Trek Academy Cadets and contains selected material from the data banks of the master computer. Articles of Federation "Federation Flag" and uniforms. "Star Fleet organisation" "Detailed schematics of Star Fleet equipment" "Federation codes and much more. Fully illustrated. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 194 pages Hardcover. **£4.00**

All prices include postage!

### HARDCOVER CINEMA BOOKS

**SCIENCE FICTION IN THE MOVIES: AN A-Z** (Pickard) A reference guide to the films, characters and special effects of science fiction movies. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 144 pages plus 16 pages of stills. **£5.50**

**MOVIE SPECIAL EFFECTS** (Rovin) A history and re-creation of the methods of special effects photography. Over 150 photo's. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 176 pages. **£5.95**

**THE FILMS OF GEORGE PAL** (Hickman) From The Purple People to Doc Savage vs When Worlds Collide and War of the Worlds, the making of each of George Pal's fourteen feature films is described in detail. Over 250 photographs. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 180 pages. **£10.00**

**THE GREAT TELEVISION SERIES** (Rovin) A loving, nostalgic look at the hundreds of heroes who have appeared on television since it became a mass medium in 1947. Includes Star Trek, The Man from U.N.C.L.E., Batman and more! Almost 150 stills. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 176 pages. **£3.80**

**AN ALBUM OF GREAT SCIENCE FICTION FILMS** (Manciel) An overview of the development of the genre. Almost 100 stills. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 96 pages. **£4.85**

### JAPANESE STARLOG

The Japanese language edition of Starlog, published in a format you've never seen before. Features bold Japanese graphics with a fantastic full colour, pull-out poster in every issue. Packaged in a plastic, laminated cover every issue is a visual treat and is chock-full of rare colour stills.

2. Special effects issue, combination colour landscape and Space 1999 Edge blueprint poster; sf graphics catalogue.
3. Supermarionation issue; (2) colour gate fold posters of future cities, X-Wing fighter blueprints, Godzilla.
4. Superman the Movie special, in-flight poster, international comic art, Spaceships preview.
5. Wonder Woman gunt poster, Japanese monster guide; sf art, Japanese history of robots.
6. Science fiction review. Much original Japanese sf art; photo's never before published in US. Foxy Ackerman souvenirs; colour photo collages and posters.
7. Superman the Movie section — the complete movie story, puzzles and mazes. Chris Foss fold-out; Star Trek animation.
8. Alien preview and poster, gum card collectors section; Japanese preview of Dean's fantasy art, behind-the-scenes of Japanese movie productions.

**£5.00 each**

### ART BOOKS

**THE FANTASTIC ART OF BORIS VALLEJO** This collection of showcases Boris' astonishing versatility in beautiful reproductions of his most famous paintings including his work on the Tarzan, Gor and Conan books. Includes paintings not previously published. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 96 pages including 40 full colour plates. **£5.35**

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** (Archileo) Super sword and sorcery fantasy paintings. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 96 pages almost all in full colour. Adults only. **£5.35**

Also available in hardcover. **£5.35**

**21st CENTURY FOSS** SF hardware from one of the best. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 144 pages almost all in full colour. **£5.80**

**SENTINEL** (Mead) Syd Mead is a visualiser of the American Dream. He takes the year 2000 as his time and space reference, designing the cluster-pod housing, computer-guided automobiles, space stations and outrageous space colonial architecture and some of the part of that ultra-modern world. Sentinel is not a book of fantasy, it is a visual encyclopedia of the possible. 12" x 12", 160 pages almost all in full colour. **£7.00**

Many prices down!  
Your continuing and increasing  
custom has enabled us to  
increase our purchasing power  
and we are passing the  
additional saving on to you with  
our thanks.

**THE ART OF THE BROTHERS HILDEBRANDT** Best known as the illustrators of Tolkien's world of Middle Earth, this collection includes many of their most famous paintings including work on paintings from their private collections. 10 1/2" x 11" 108 pages including 40 full colour plates. **£5.25**

**FRANK KELLY FREAS: THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION** (Freest) By and about the World's most renowned science fiction illustrator. Packed with examples of his work. 11" x 8 1/2", 120 pages — almost half in full colour. **£5.35**

**MYTHOPOEICON** (Woodroffe) Fantasies Monsters Nightmares, Daydreams, the paintings, drawings, book-plates and record sleeve illustrations of Patrick Woodroffe. 11 1/2" x 8 1/2", 160 pages in full colour throughout. Also available in paperback. **£5.10**

**THE FLIGHT OF KARLUS** (Lehmkuhl, Dean & Dean) A collection of more than 130 full colour paintings by 32 of today's top fantasy artists including Peter Jones, Chris Moore, Roger Dean, Angus McKie, Patrick Elson, Chris Foss, and others. 12" x 12", 160 pages almost all in full colour. **£7.30**

**VIEWS** (Dean) The vision is the thing for Roger Dean. Like all his countries, Dean is a loner. He is no part of a movement or school. He has no direct antecedents. 12" x 12", 156 pages in full colour throughout. **£6.80**

**THE FANTASTIC ART OF FRANK FRAZETTA** Acclaimed as the definitive sword & sorcery artist, these books contain much of his published work. Each is 11" x 9" 96 pages including black & white studies as well as full colour plates. 1. 33 full colour plates. **£4.55**

2. 35 full colour plates. **£4.55**

3. 30 full colour plates plus many unpublished studies from the artist's sketchbook. **£4.55**

4. 36 full colour plates including unpublished paintings and exciting new versions of early work. Also contains more unpublished studies from the artist's sketchbook. **£4.55**

**TOMORROW AND BEYOND** (Summer ed) Masterpieces of science fiction illustration by 64 of today's top artists including Boris, DiFate, Mead and Bentley. Over 200 paintings — all in colour. 12" x 12", 160 pages. **£5.00**

**WONDERWORKS** (Whelan) Michael Whelan has gathered an enthusiastic following of every persuasion, from the followers of Faubert and the Gray Mouse to Ann McCaffrey's dragon riders. His paintings are notable for both their subtle but brilliant harmonies and for his careful attention to every detail. 11" x 8 1/2", 120 pages including more than 50 in full colour. **£4.55**

We welcome callers at our shop THE EDGE OF FOREVER, 54, Bellefrouse Road, Welling, Kent (telephone 01-301 3772). It stocks our full range of fantasy film material plus science fiction, horror and fantasy novels, posters and American comics (from back-issues to the very latest imports). Open 10.00 am — 5.30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 9.00 am — 5.30 pm Saturday. Closed all day Wednesday.

# 'IT'S ONLY A MOVIE!'

A regular column  
by author and  
Starburst film  
critic John Brosnan.



A selection of scenes from the Alvin Rakoff film, *Death Ship*.

## DEATH SHIP

Somewhere in the world there's a mysterious new country that bears a startling resemblance to my home state of Western Australia but where the inhabitants speak with a mixture of British and American accents and drive American cars. This strange place is the setting of *Harlequin*, an Australian movie directed by the aptly named Simon Wincer. It stars Robert Powell as a mysterious stranger who arrives in this never-never land to prevent an American senator, Nick Raus, played by the very English David Hemmings from being corrupted by the evil party boss Doc Wheelan, played by the very American Broderick Crawford. The agent through which the mysterious stranger, called Gregory, hopes to achieve this redemption is the Senator's fatally ill child Alex, played by a singularly unpleasant-looking little boy whose voice sometimes seems to belong to an Australian boy who can't act and sometimes to an English girl who also can't act.

By apparently curing the boy Gregory acquires the gratitude, and even the devotion, of the child's mother Sandra (Carmen Duncan, the only genuine Anti-

podean among the lead players). This basic situation seems to have been inspired by the story of Rasputin and his influence over the Russian royal family through their haemophilic son but I was also reminded of that excellent 1949 movie *Alias Nick Beal* in which Ray Milland played an agent of the devil sent to win the soul of a politician (Thomas Mitchell). But where it was clear as to what Beal was up to Gregory's motives are somewhat opaque. Though he describes himself at one point as a "fallen angel" he is presented as a mainly sympathetic character yet this is seriously undermined by the sequence where he callously causes a maid to pour acid on her head instead of shampoo...

You feel that no one involved with *Harlequin* really knew what type of movie they were supposed to be making. It's a confusing clash of genres that reflects the confusion of its pseudo-American/British/Australian setting. The script is the main problem, which is unfortunate as it was written by Everett De Roche who also wrote *The Long Weekend*, one Australian movie I particularly admired (see *Starburst* 23). Nor is it

a very well directed film and the special effects sequences are frankly embarrassing (you know when an optical effects shot is about to begin because the screen suddenly goes very murky).

The movie does come to somewhat shaky life in the last quarter when Gregory escapes from prison and begins a cat-and-mouse game with the politician at his fortress-like home but it's not enough to save it from being placed in the "interesting failure" category.

Another movie that belongs in that category is *Death Ship*, directed by Alvin Rakoff and starring George Kennedy, Richard Crenna and Sally Ann Howes. The idea of a ship possessed by the evil spirits of dead Nazis is quite a good one — a deserted ship is a naturally eerie setting and offers plenty of possibilities for a horror story — but *Death Ship* fails to realize its potential. There's a rather hasty slap-dash air about the film that permeates it on every level, from the script through to the direction and editing.

Lack of money is obviously one reason for this certain exterior shots are endlessly repeated. The sequence where the



ghost ship collides with a cruise ship seems to have been constructed out of footage from at least four other movies, including *The Poseidon Adventure* — but there is also a distinct lack of imagination in the way it is all handled. Sequences that could have been major horror set-pieces are just thrown away by Rakoff who doesn't seem to have much of a feel for the genre and too often the film drifts into absurdity, provoking laughs from the audience instead of shudders (and the casting of George Kennedy as the heavy doesn't help here either).

The scriptwriters also make the serious mistake of letting the audience in on the true nature of the ghost ship at the very beginning instead of letting the situation unfold gradually. As a result there is very little build-up of mystery or tension, but even so there are still moments that are suitably horrific, such as the discovery of the corpse-filled torture room and the sequence in the ship's cinema where one of the characters (*Nick Mancuso*) claws frantically at the screen on which Nazi newsreel footage is being projected and keeps finding yet another screen beneath the one he rips up. Also memorable is the scene where the little boy (*Danny Higham*) is walking fearfully along a corridor while the doors of the bulk-heads behind him swing inexorably shut one by one. . . . *Death Ship* is worth a look if you're a dedicated horror fan but on a rating of 1 to 10 I'd give it only 3%.

And now *Prom Night*, a Canadian movie directed by English-born Paul Lynch. According to Lynch the movie was developed "from a visual idea" that he had been toying with for about a year. Presumably the "visual idea" was either John Carpenter's *Halloween* or Brian De Palma's *Carrie* [see page 36 this issue] as *Prom Night* is nothing more than a perfunctory combination of these two movies.

It begins with a sequence set in 1974, showing how four children cause the death of a fifth child, a girl, in a derelict school then moves on six years to the anniversary of her death which also happens to be the night of the big high school dance. The four children have obviously done a lot of growing up in those six years, particularly the girls, and seem to have forgotten all about that fateful day. But "someone" hasn't and one by one the four of them are attacked by a mysterious assailant in black. Who can it be? The escaped maniac who was wrongly accused of murdering the girl in the first place? Or can it be the school janitor who has an unhealthy interest in the female pupils? There is also a sub-plot involving a plan by one of the intended victims, Wendy (*Eddie Benton*) to humiliate the sister of the dead girl, Kim (*Jamie Lee Curtis*) and Nick (*Casey Stevens*), Wendy's ex-boy friend, when they are crowned Queen and King of the

Prom which is blatant carbon-copy of the similar situation in *Carrie*.

None of this predictable story is handled with any real directorial flair by Lynch and it's very inferior to that other *Halloween* rip-off *Friday the 13th* which, while just as unoriginal, did at least provide some genuine shocks. But the hardest thing to accept about *Prom Night* is the idea that Jamie Lee Curtis, Eddie Benton and a few of the other girls are teenage high school students when they all look as if their school days are a long way behind them. Particularly Ms Curtis who, good actress as she is, is getting a little too long-in-the-tooth for these adolescent roles that are built on her success in *Halloween*.

I think *Prom Night* proves once again that it's not sufficient to simply rip-off a

successful movie formula — you've got to add something to it, even if it's simply coming up with ingenious new ways of disposing of your victims a la *Friday the 13th*. *Prom Night* brings nothing new at all to this particular sub-genre of the horror movie.

Next month's column will be devoted to Stanley Kubrick's new movie *The Shining* which, from all accounts, is a failure in terms of translating Stephen King's novel to the screen though apparently Kubrick wasn't interested in doing that anyway. I would have liked to have covered it in this issue but was informed by Warner Brothers, when enquiring about the preview screenings, that if I wanted to review the film I would have to pay to see it. Nice one, Warners!

## PROM NIGHT



A selection of scenes from the Paul Lynch film *Prom Night*.





# The RADIANT UNIVERSE

Electronic Images from Space  
Michael Marten & John Chesterman  
A stunning portfolio of space photography  
featuring 110 computer enhanced full colour  
photographs. A breathtaking experience.

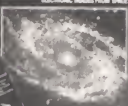
128 pages; 110 full colour photographs;  
57 black and white and duotone  
photographs; Hardback;  
ISBN 0 7137 1116 7; £9.95 net.

by Bernhardt J. Hurwood  
A behind the scenes look at one  
of the most spectacular films  
ever made. With 67 action  
photographs.

128 pages; 67 black and white  
photographs; Large format  
Paperback; ISBN 0 441 52701 9;  
£2.95 net.

# The METEOR Scrapbook

## THE RADIANT UNIVERSE



Michael Marten, John Chesterman



# A STAR TREK Catalog

Edited by Gerry Turnbull

The most amazing compendium of  
information and illustrations about the  
fictional world of the Starship Enterprise.  
Essential reading for all Trekkies.

160 pages; Over 130 black and white  
photographs; Large format Paperback;  
ISBN 0 448 14053 5; £2.95 net.



Available by direct mail  
from Dept. SB,  
Mallard Book Service,  
New Orchard, Poole,  
Dorset. BH15 1LU.



Please enclose full remittance  
plus 85p post and package.

TWO OR MORE BOOKS POST FREE.

# FORBIDDEN PLANET

IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A SIGNING OF

## THE MUTANTS

A NEW COLLECTION OF  
WEIRD AND WONDERFUL STORIES

## FRANKENSTEIN

A MAJOR NEW PORTFOLIO  
CONTAINING SIX NEW PLATES



BY **BERNI WRIGHTSON**

ON SATURDAY 29th NOVEMBER  
2.00-5.00

London's Newest Science Fiction and Comic Book Shop!  
23 Denmark St. London WC2 - Just off Charing X Rd.

OPENING TIMES 10am-6pm; THURSDAY 10am-7pm TEL: 01 836 4179

- ON SATURDAY DECEMBER 13th 1980 -

# COMIC MART

BRITAIN'S LARGEST FANTASY FAN GATHERING AT THE  
CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, LONDON.

## COMIC MART

THE PLACE TO GET FILM  
MAGAZINES BOOKS  
POSTERS COMIC BOOKS  
(MARVEL D.C. ETC)  
POSTERS ART PORT  
FOLIOS BADGES  
FANZINES SCIENCE  
FICTION/FANTASY  
MATERIAL AND ANYTHING  
ELSE YOU EVER  
WANTED TO COLLECT  
OVER 100 STALLS OF  
FANTASY  
PARAPHERNA. A TO MAKE  
YOUR MIND BOGGLE!

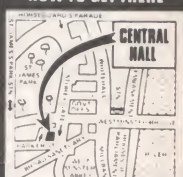
## FUTURE MARTS

FEBRUARY 7th 1981  
APRIL 4th 1981  
JUNE 6th 1981

## DEALERS:

FOR INFORMATION  
PLEASE SEND AN S.A.  
TO  
TITAN DISTRIBUTORS  
P.O. BOX 269,  
LONDON, WC2H 9NN  
ENGLAND

## HOW TO GET THERE



BY UNDERGROUND TO WESTMINSTER (C) ST JAMES'S PARK  
BY BUS 3 11 12 29 29 59 77 88 159  
168 172 173

★ FREE - DOORS OPEN MID-DAY ★

# BOOK WORLD

This month regular book critic John Bowles reviews the latest offering from Stephen King and a new anthology, *Dark Forces*.

Stephen King's many fans (such as the editor of this magazine, who would only let me review the book if I promised to return the review copy to him afterwards) will need no urging from me to rush out and obtain his new novel *Firestarter* (Macdonald, £6.95). However, there must be a few people left in the world who haven't read anything by the author of *Carrie* and *The Shining* — until I opened *Firestarter* I was one of them — so let me start by telling them that in this case the hype isn't misplaced. On the basis of this latest example of his craft I'd say that King certainly deserves his success.

If I were forced to pigeonhole *Firestarter* I'd have to categorize it as science fiction. There's no element of supernatural horror, although the story is certainly packed with tension and terror. In 1969 Andy McGee and Vicky Tomlinson, both hard-up students, volunteer for what appears to be a routine drug experiment sponsored by a shadowy CIA-type government agency called The Shop. The experiment — with a new and powerful hallucinogen — has disastrous consequences for many of the participants, and the survivors (including Andy and Vicky) develop various degrees of parapsychic ability. In Andy's case it's the capacity to "push"; a form of telepathically induced autosuggestion whereby he can make people do anything he wants. But the trouble really begins when Vicky and Andy marry and have a daughter, Charlie. The drug has changed them genetically and Charlie consequently has a far more powerful and dangerous ability — pyrokinesis, the power to start fires just by thinking about it.

The McGees do their best to teach Charlie to control her talent and conceal it, but even years later they are still under Shop surveillance, and once the agents get wind of what is happening they want very badly to get hold of Charlie — so that they can pull her apart to see what makes her tick. Soon enough Vicky is callously murdered in a kidnap attempt, and Andy and Charlie are on the run from their own government. Worse, Andy's "pushing" — which was what enabled them to escape — is slowly but surely destroying some part of his brain: each use of the power brings his death much closer.

That's about as much as one should give away about the plot of the novel, which begins as the agents are once more closing in on Andy and Charlie. One thing which impressed me about *Firestarter* is Stephen King's ability to orchestrate the events of the novel. He arranges narrative



and flashback in such a way as to build tension steadily through the novel's 400+ pages. It's like watching an expert card-player working through a difficult hand. He also has an excellent visual sense, so that the book's major scenes really spring to life in the mind's eye. They are excellent scenes, too: he doesn't put a foot wrong in showing you Andy's and Charlie's abilities in action. Better still, *Firestarter* has in John Rainbird — a war-scarred, death-fixated Indian who is the Shop's number one agent — an original, memorable and terrifying character.

It isn't flawless, mind you. Once or twice King goes over the top when trying to keep the reader breathless and glued to the page. For instance, when a group of Shop agents are desperately fleeing Charlie's firestarting, it seems unnecessary

to have one of them dive over a garden fence and impale himself through the neck on a garden stake. Also, the ending of the novel showed, for me, a rather touching naivete on King's part (I suspect he's an old hippie at heart). But those are minor quibbles with a novel which, though it's no work of art, is a compellingly expert piece of craftsmanship.

King also turns up, greatly to the reader's relief, at the end of this month's other major offering: *Dark Forces* edited by Kirby McCauley (Macdonald, £6.95), an anthology of previously unpublished stories of "suspense and supernatural horror" (to quote the subtitle). It's a fat book — over 550 pages — and promises a great deal, both by the comparison McCauley himself makes with Harlan Ellison's seminal sf anthology *Dangerous*



Opposite: Top-selling author Stephen King. Left: The cover of the latest novel from Stephen King, *Firestarter*, now available in hardcover. Reports indicate that the film rights have already been sold. Below: The cover of a new hardcover anthology, *Dark Forces*, featuring work by Stephen King, Robert Bloch and Theodore Sturgeon.

STEPHEN KING

Stories of  
Supernatural Horrorincluding  
STEPHEN KING  
ROBERT BLOCH  
ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER  
RAY BRADBURY

Edited with notes by Kirby McCauley

*Visions* and its very strong lineup of authors (Ray Bradbury, Stephen King, Robert Bloch, Theodore Sturgeon, Robert Aickman, Nobel Prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer and a host of others). Regrettably it fails to live up to its promise.

You'd expect an anthology of 23 new stories to contain at least one really outstanding piece of work, wouldn't you? I mean, that's not an unreasonable thing to ask, is it? Well, you don't get one here. Most of the stories are wholly unmemorable little squibs which spend a few token pages building up what is supposed to pass for atmosphere, then introduce the supernatural element (or straightforward threat) before proceeding as fast as possible to the horrifying conclusion (in which, generally speaking, something

slimy or sharp-toothed leaps out from concealment and does unpleasant things to the protagonist). Okay, most horror stories have followed this general outline since the genre first appeared, but in most of the examples here the attempt is depressingly perfunctory. In stories of this sort almost everything depends on atmosphere, on evoking a mood which makes the reader huddle closer to the light. These stories scarcely bother; they're like comic strip versions of the real thing.

It's probably no coincidence, then, that the two most enjoyable stories are by far the two longest. T.E.D. Klein is a name new to me, but his story "The Children of the Kingdom" is commendably well-written and carefully built up, even if ultimately the idea behind it is

rather weak. I wouldn't be surprised to see him produce something spectacular in the future. Stephen King we've encountered before. His story, "The Mist", is over 130 pages long — many shorter pieces have been published on their own as novels before now. There's nothing startling or original about the idea: a strange mist, probably resulting from a botched government experiment — one gets the impression King is not fond of US government agencies — gradually envelops part of New England; hidden within it are hordes of strange, malevolent clawed and tentacled creatures which do appallingly fatal things to anyone foolish enough to venture out. The story focuses on a group trapped inside a supermarket when the mist rolls in. It's pretty lurid pulp-magazine material, but King attacks it so wholeheartedly that the result is a compelling read which, at the end, achieves an impressively phantasmagoric effect.

I'm just back from attending the 1980 World Science Fiction Convention in Boston — the largest to date, with over 5,500 people in attendance. Guests of honour were husband-and-wife sf writers Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm; other notables in attendance included Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, Harlan Ellison, Samuel R. Delany, Philip Jose Farmer, Larry Niven, L. Sprague de Camp and many more. The 1980 Hugo Awards were presented. Best novel was *The Foundations of Paradise* by Arthur C. Clarke, best dramatic presentation was *Alien*, best non-fiction book *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, edited by Peter Nicholls (a book which I highly recommend, incidentally). *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* received a special award given each year for humour in science fiction. It was an enjoyable convention, though I was patriotically gratified to see that the organization didn't really compare with last year's Worldcon in Brighton. Starburst readers will doubtless be interested to know that Harlan Ellison has just completed a novel-length sequel to "A Boy and His Dog". It's entitled *Blood's A Rover*, and will be published in the USA by Ace Books in a lavishly illustrated large-format paperback.

Update on a piece of news from an earlier column: Frank Herbert has now delivered the new *Dune* novel to his publishers here and in America. It's entitled *God Emperor of Dune*, and advance reports are very favourable. Gollancz will be publishing it in this country next June, with an NEL paperback to follow in due course. I hope to get my hands on a copy of the typescript in the near future, and will report further once I do.



23 DENMARK ST. LONDON WC2H 8NN ENGLAND

## STAR WARS/EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK STORYBOOK

The whole story from the film illustrated with many spectacular and exciting stills. Large format, softcover. **£1.95**

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK PORTFOLIO

#### RALPH MCQUARRIE

Incredible value! 24 21" x 10" paintings in full colour by Ralph McQuarrie, used by the creators of Empire Strikes Back in the creation of the film. Dramatic scenes and key characters such as Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, See - Threepio and Artoo - Dettro are all featured. Superbly rendered these are ideal for posters. The 24 paintings come in an attractive package with a special sheet listing in detail the action in each scene. **£3.40**

### CINEFANTASIE 6/4 - 7/1

Special double issue with guide to Alan Watts, packed with information and photos. **£3.40**

### THE ART OF STAR WARS

An excellent book featuring all the art connected with the film. The poster art, the spaceship photos and designs, the storyboards, the costume photos are all included plus the complete George Lucas film script. Large size. **£8.50**

### THE ART OF THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

by VIC BULLOCK and VALERIE HOFFMAN  
A superb brand new American book, featuring a collection of production and matte paintings, sketches, costume illustrations, and storyboards from the motion picture. Full colour. 176 pages, large size.  
Paperback edition **£15.00**  
Hardback edition **£18.00**

### "EMPIRE STRIKES BACK" - ILLUSTRATED EDITION

Larger size paperback version of the novel with many illustrations by Ralph McQuarrie. This will be a real collectors item. **£3.00**

### ONCE UPON A GALAXY - A JOURNAL OF THE MAKING OF THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ALAN ARNOLD

Superb paperback, illustrated with black and white stills giving the complete background to the film, including interviews with George Lucas and many of the stars. This is an essential item if you want to understand all that goes into the making of the Star Wars epic. **£1.25**

### STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK POP-UP BOOK

At last the pop-up book that all Empire fans and pop-up collectors have been waiting for. Truly memorable this offers minutes of fun for everyone and will top off any collection of Star Wars books. **£3.00**

### CALENDARS

#### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK CALENDAR 1981

Twelve full colour stills featuring Luke, Darth Vader, Chewbacca, Leia and others) and centfold. **£4.20**

### STILLS

#### MOONRAKER STILLS

American B & W 10 colour stills from Moonraker  
M-1 - Portrait shot - Roger Moore as Bond, ready for action.  
M-2 - Lois Chiles and Moore, portrait shot.  
M-3 - Jaws attacks Bond, in cable car.  
M-4 - Villains floating in zero gravity, in space station.  
M-5 - Bond thumps the baddest.  
M-6 - Bond and villain in death grip.  
M-7 - Bond hanging-armed, fight who he knew.  
M-8 - Jaws in Boat, lifted with gun. **55p each or £4.20 the set.**

### ALIEN STILLS

The official set of 8 colour stills from 20th Century Fox. Each still features the following scenes:

1. The Spaceship Nostramo.
  2. Ripley discovers the mysterious eggs.
  3. Kane's alien spaceship.
  4. Kane, Dallas & Lambert prepare to enter the alien craft.
  5. Kane in his death throes, just before the horrific chestburst.
  6. Kane starts into the open 'egg' - seconds before disaster strikes.
  7. A glorious view of the discovery of the 'space colony' - Ripley's amazing designs.
  8. The Nostramo and of Ripley pass over head.
- 55p each or £4.20 for all eight.  
Also available 20 11" x 14", one showing Ripley just about to encounter the Alien, the other a shot of the alien chestburst scene.  
Ripley **85p**  
Chest Burst **85p**

### BOOKS

#### THE ALIEN WORLD: THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE STEVEN EISLER

A WONDERFUL BOOK! Under the guise of examining the known alien life forms on the galaxy/galaxies, and the planets they inhabit, Eisler has assembled a brilliant selection of SF artwork (nominally showing the life forms he discusses in the text). There are some outstanding pictures here with some of the best work from the new generation of SF artists who have had such a great impact in spreading SF's popularity - more power to anyone a fellow who produces a book like this. Hardcover, profusely illustrated with 90 colour pictures. It's a joy and a treasure trove. **£3.95**

#### THE DUENDE HISTORY OF THE SHADOW MAGAZINE WILL MURRAY

Large size softcover book devoted to the Shadow. The volume includes a history of the Shadow with cover reproductions from the pulp's story line, a Shadow story by Walter Gibson written for this book, an interview with Walter Gibson, and much more on and about the Shadow. Profusely illustrated with cover reproductions and drawings; this is a real pleasure for Shadow fans. **£4.80**

#### TOUR OF THE UNIVERSE MALCOLM ROBERTS and ROBERT HOLDSTOCK

Creative new handbook book from this talented pair. The idea is simple: Leo and Caroline, in the year 2577 won a competition and go on a tour of the universe (all expenses paid of course) and the book is a printed home movie of their trip, including their tickets, passports and paintings of the planets and people they visit. Includes art by McKee, Tony Roberts, Jim Buntz, Not quite Butlin, but then what is? Full colour. **£7.95**

#### WANTED! 22 ALIEN CRIMINALS WANTED BY THE INTERGALACTIC SECURITY BUREAU

Large size volume with portrait and accompanying "wanted" sheet (listing height, description and so on) for 22 of the most hostile aliens you could ever wish to meet in a dark star - each 11" x 16" poster can be mounted on a wall. **£3.40**

#### STAR TREK MAPS

Incredible new map for Star Trek fans/map freaks! 4 huge maps (each 29" x 41") of the Star Trek universe, actually accurate to the known universe, one could (if owning a spacecraft) negotiate through space. Arthur Dent would have loved this! Packaged in an attractive envelope and accompanied by a 32 page hardcover book detailing the use of the charts.

#### Watch out Star!

FILM MAKING The fantastic guide to Special Effects Film Making. Edited by Don Doherty. Superb soft copy, explaining many special effects secrets & techniques designed to show how to achieve incredible effects on a low budget. Excellent reading, very technical as well. **£7.20**

### STARLOG GUIDEBOOKS

The following are all handsome, well presented soft cover books published by Starlog, of the same high standard & quality as the magazine

#### SPACESHIPS (expanded edition)

96 pages, the usual great selection of photos (many in colour) to be expected from Starlog publications, including new films - Alien, Black Hole, Star Trek and other new stills from shows/films included in the previous edition. **£4.60**

SPECIAL EFFECTS An analysis of all the top special effects in films. 100 pages with plenty of colour. Includes Robbie the Robot, The Nautilus, miniatures, dinosaurs, Lucas. When Worlds Collide, Saurer C-57D, George Lucas, Close Encounters UFO, etc. **£4.20**

#### SPECIAL EFFECTS VOL 2

Carries on from volume 1, exploring the artistry of matte painting and effects, animation, special effects, make-up, and more included in the excellent selection of film stills are the scaping scene from Mantic and a headburst sequence from Dawn of the Dead, printed in colour - mainly red. **£4.80**

#### SCIENCE FICTION HEROES

Features many colour photos of a list of characters including Star Wars, Star Trek, John Koenig, Ripley, Wonder Woman, Superman and many more. Mostly 1 or 2 pages devoted to each character or star. **£2.40**

#### SCIENCE FICTION VILLAINS

A new addition to the Starlog Guidebook Series, features all the best known baddies from Science Fiction and Film & a usual guidebook format. **£2.40**

#### WEAPONS

A full listing of guns, rays, lasers and other weapons from film and TV and comic books, portfolios, comics, includes stills/blueprint from Star Wars weapons/phaser from Star Trek, Moonbase alpha, laser cannon Space 1999, and much more. **£2.40**

### MAGAZINES

- STARBUST** Science fantasy in film, TV and comics  
1 Star Wars, Star Trek. **50p**  
2 Prisoner, Soderman, Close Encounters. **50p**  
3 Close Encounters, Superman. **50p**  
4 Battlestar, Robots, Superman effects, Invasion of the Body Snatchers. **50p**  
9 Lord of the Rings, Body Snatchers, Forbidden Planet. **50p**  
11 James Bond special effects, Star Trek, The Humanoid, Lord of the Rings. **50p**  
12 Bond/Moonraker, Screen Robots, China Syndrome. **50p**  
13 Moonraker, Space 1999, Buck Rogers. **50p**  
14 Alien, Dr Who, Avengers. **50p**  
15 Alien, Dr Who, Nigel Kneale, Alien art - Cobb. **50p**  
16 Alien, Black Hole, 7, Move Alien. **50p**  
19 Saturn 3, Black Hole, Star Trek, Dr Who. **50p**  
21 Special effects - Ian Scoones of the BBC who works on Dr Who and Blake's 7, Black Hole interviews, The Outer Limits. **50p**  
22 Empire Strikes Back, John Carpenter, The Invisibile Ray. **50p**  
23 Empire Strikes Back, Saturn 3, Flash Gordon. **50p**  
24 Special anniversary issue Caroline Munroe interview. Mark Hamill on the Empire Strikes Back. Stingray. Colour on up to M. Hamill and Hamill. Colour poster containing stills of various films. **60p**  
25 Battlestar Galactica, Superman SFX, Jack Arnold, Saturn 3. **60p**

#### HOUSE OF HAMMER

title change to **HALLS OF HORROR**, 19-up!  
Nicely produced magazine with features of films and comic strip versions of films. **75p**

- 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21  
each 35p

#### LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS

A 140 page magazine dedicated to exploration of the horror/fantasy world. This issue, besides review, contains a Dave Prowse interview, Hamill film examination, Dracula past and present and loads of reading and photos. Really excellent magazine. **£1.95**

#### MEDIACENE PREVIEW

41 Converted to a magazine format, this issue features a wrap-around full colour Empire Strikes Back painting by Jim Steranko, nearly 40 pages of photos, art and interviews about Star Wars, plus coverage of Clash of the Titans, Saturn 3 and the Lord of Light and many other features. Special 12-up issue only. **£2.40**  
42 Superb issue! Just bursting at the seams with everything a fantasy fan could desire - behind the scenes with the making of Star Wars, Gary Smith's art for a new movie, Superman - photos from the new film, Silver Surfer - exclusive coverage of his screen debut, Flash Gordon - the new film, a new Harlan Ellison story featuring A Boy and his Dog and other features. 112 pages. **£1.80**

#### CINEFIX

This magazine in just the space of two issues is now the equal in terms of depth of coverage, professional standards and general quality of content to Cinefantasie, which is a notable achievement. If you've not yet seen a copy, it is a superb magazine. This issue features Empire Strikes Back, Star Trek and Greg Jean. **£2.10**

#### SPECIAL:

#### LET'S PLAY CHESS ANTHONY HANSFORD,

illustrated by JOHN BOLTON

As a fantasy shop this is not the sort of book we would normally stock, but it is impossible to resist the beauty of fully illustrated hardback. John Bolton has brought to life the ideas of chess in a novel fashion by painting sword and sorcery and fantasy pictures around the board. The result is a stunning collection of over 20 different paintings. Very good value at the amazingly low price of **£1.99**

### PORTFOLIOS

#### THE METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY JIM STARLIN

4 plates featuring the lead story in Epic, in full colour. Essential item for all Starlin fans. **£4.80**

#### MARVEL SUPERHERO PORTFOLIOS

Brand new from S.G. Productions, each set contains 4 11" x 14", beautifully drawn and coloured plates.  
X-MEN: Set 1 (BYRNE, STARLIN/LARSON)  
4 prints: Vis the Sentinels  
In the Savage Land  
At the Mangrove  
At Home. **£4.20**

#### THE INCREDIBLE HULK SET (FASNER/LARSON) Set 1

4 prints: At War with the Sub-Mariner  
The Abomination  
In Combat with the Thing  
In a Nuclear Showdown. **£4.20**

We have thousands of film and TV books, magazines and sets of books and magazines, portfolios, comics, comic books and more listed in our catalogue. Please send a stamped addressed envelope (approx. 6 p) to get a free copy.

The books are a selection of the items available in our catalogue, with full with all orders. Please add postage as follows: orders up to £2 - add 80p; orders up to £5 - add £1; orders up to £10 - add £1.25; £10 or over add £1.50. Please pay by cheque or postal order made payable to Forbidden Planet Ltd.



# WILLIS O'BRIEN

Hailed as the "Father of King Kong" Willis O'Brien turned the movie industry on its head in 1933 with the release of an adventure film whose star was a twenty-five foot ape. The movie produced a sequel, a niche for O'Brien in the film industry and introduced the process of Stop Motion Animation to the general public. Phil Edwards looks at the long, though not always successful, career of a pioneer of special effects.



Above: Without doubt Willis O'Brien's greatest and most famous creation - King Kong. Though the producers wanted the most ferocious ape ever filmed, O'Brien felt that the creature would not provoke audience sympathy and attempted to humanise Kong. Nevertheless, he had his ferocious moments. Centre: From the climatic finale of *King Kong*. The climbs the Empire State Building and battles the American Air Force. Note the absence of a tv antenna!

**W**illis O'Brien was born in Oakland, California on March 2 1886. At the age of thirteen he left home and worked as a cowboy. He later went on to become a prize fighter and was then apprenticed to a marble sculptor. In 1913 at the age of 29 he was working as an assistant sculptor at San Francisco's World's Fair. During this period he began to experiment with stop motion animation using a borrowed movie camera. As early as 1914 he had made a test film which featured a dinosaur and a caveman. In 1915 he made a short film called *The Dinosaur and the Missing Link* and sold it to the Edison company for 525 dollars. Two more trick films followed, *Morpheus Mike* and *Birth of a Flivver*. In 1916, O'Brien moved to New York to make further shorts for Edison. These included *RFD 10,000 BC*, *Prehistoric Poultry*, *Curious Pets of Our Ancestors* and *Nippy's Nightmare*. The latter was the first stop motion film to feature live actors with the models, though not in the same shot.

In 1917, O'Brien met Herbert M. Dawley, one of the cinema's pioneer photographers. The two men agreed to make *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*. For this film O'Brien constructed five prehistoric monsters under the guidance of Dr Barnum Brown of the American Museum of Natural History in an effort to make the dinosaurs as realistic as

possible. The completed film ran 3,000 feet, but after disagreements with Dawley who owned the property, the film was cut to 520 feet. Despite this, the film was a huge success and opened at the New York Strand in 1919. O'Brien received no credit on the film or its advertising posters. The deleted footage was used by Dawley in another short film he released the following year, *Along the Moonbeam Trail*. Dawley even went so far as to take out patents on full size armatures in an effort to discredit O'Brien's work, and in contemporary interviews stated that he had manipulated these models for the film.

Meanwhile, O'Brien had been contracted by Watterson Rothacker to make a series of short novelty films using the O'Brien animation techniques. Though none were made Rothacker managed to acquire the rights for Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (see feature in Starburst 12). The two men realised that the scope of the film was well beyond the usual one-man operation that O'Brien was used to and Rothacker arranged that film should be made as a co-production with First National Pictures.

While attending evening classes at the Otis Art Institute, O'Brien met Marcel Delgado, a twenty year old Mexican sculptor. O'Brien hired him for 75 dollars a week to help on *The Lost World* project at First National's Burbank Studios. The

two worked for two years under tight security, sculpting the fifty models to be used in the feature. These were far more sophisticated than O'Brien's previous models. They had articulated ball and socket joints and the muscles were built up with latex pads. Many of the models also had air bladders inserted in them to achieve breathing effects. By 1922 a test reel was ready and was given to Conan Doyle who was visiting America at the time, lecturing on his spiritualist beliefs. He showed the film without explanation at a meeting held by The Society of American Magicians. Doyle later told the gathering that the film was a manifestation from the ether and caused a sensation with page one headlines the following day. Realising the story was getting out of hand he later issued a statement explaining the film's origin. Herbert M. Dawley, attracted by the publicity, took out a writ against Doyle and Rothacker, stating that the film had been made using techniques that he had developed for *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*. Fortunately nothing came of the case.

In July 1924, work on *The Lost World* commenced in earnest with a budget of one million dollars. Full scale sets were built of London streets and exotic jungles.

Two directors worked on the film, Harry Hoyt and William Dowling. After a





Above: The giant ape faced a few monsters during the 100 minute running time of the film. Here he is seen tearing the Lady with the Golden Tonsils, Fay Wray, from the taloned grasp of a prehistoric pterodactyl. Elsewhere in the movie Kong goes fifteen rounds with a Tyrannosaurus and wins by a clean knock-out. Most of the Skull Island footage has a strange nightmarish quality attributable in the main to the shooting of all "exteriors" in the studio.

year of filming the feature was released in 1925 and ran two hours. Surviving prints are much cut, running approximately half that time.

Despite the film's success, a planned sequel was never made. O'Brien became involved in two other projects, *Frankenstein* in which the monster was to be one of his stop motion models and H.G. Wells' *Food of the Gods*. These too, were never made.

In 1930 O'Brien sold a story idea to RKO. The film was to be called *Creation*, which would once again contain a variety of stop motion monsters in a setting not unlike that of *The Lost World*. The film went ahead and was heavily storyboarded by a corps of artists including Mario Larrinaga and Byron Crabbe who would later work on *King Kong*. Delgado was also brought in to assist O'Brien.

*Creation* presented more problems in the animation department than had *The Lost World*. Where the earlier film had been shot at silent speed (16 fps) the new film would be in sound and shot at 24 fps. This required O'Brien to rethink his methods. It also meant that one-third less animation could be achieved in the same amount of time. Unfortunately RKO was hard hit by the Depression and on the verge of bankruptcy. The studio head, William Le Baron, was replaced by whizkid David O. Selznick who was instructed by the New York office to cut back on

production. Salaries were cut drastically and all productions halted for reappraisal.

Selznick brought in producer Merian C. Cooper, to assist in the choosing of new scripts. Cooper was not impressed with the script for *Creation*, though he was impressed with the technical wizardry of O'Brien. Cooper had long been wanting to produce a film which would feature a giant ape as the star and in O'Brien's work saw the medium he could at last utilize.

Selznick obtained permission to shoot a test reel for Cooper's story. Work began in Production 601, which two years later would emerge as *King Kong*, arguably the greatest monster movie ever made.

Delgado went to work on the Kong character and created, under O'Brien's supervision, an almost human ape. Cooper was horrified. He wanted the fiercest ape ever designed. O'Brien disagreed, feeling that such a monster would not engender any sympathy from an audience. O'Brien walked out, but returned soon after.

Edgar Wallace, an English author of detective thrillers was brought over by RKO to write scripts. Cooper soon had him working on *The Beast*, RKO's working title for Kong. However, Wallace fell ill with a severe case of pneumonia and died on February 10, 1932. None of his work remained in the film, although Cooper went ahead and gave him screen

credit nonetheless.

The test reel went ahead under high security filming on RKO's Stage 3. By this time, the title had been changed to *The Eighth Wonder*.

O'Brien gave his artists and builders of miniature sets a folio of drawings by Gustav Dore and told them that he wanted a similar effect in the sets and glass paintings. The finished film has much of this Dore influence in it, particularly in the jungle sets, full of twisted trees and sombre lighting effects. O'Brien, for this test reel, used several of the dinosaur models intended for *Creation*, as well as the now redesigned Kong. Many glass paintings were done which were hung between the animation tables, giving these scenes a three dimensional effect and further enhancing the fantastic mood of the film.

The RKO executives were astonished by the test reel and production proper began. Meanwhile, Ernest Schoedsack, Cooper's partner in several earlier documentary films, most notably *Chang and Grass*, joined the production and the two set up another film to shoot simultaneously with Kong, *The Most Dangerous Game*. As well as many sets from Kong, the two producers also used several of the jungle background plates and Kong's leading lady, Fay Wray, for the horrifying thriller.

King Kong was completed at a budget

of 650 dollars and opened to ecstatic praise at the Radio City Music Hall in New York and Graumann's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. Both cinemas presented the film with elaborate stage productions, Graumann's even going so far as to display the full size head and shoulders of Kong used for several shots in the film, in its forecourt. It is easy to dismiss King Kong today as high camp. However, to treat it in such a way does both the film and its makers little credit. Full of action and adventure, King Kong remains one of the few bona fide movie classics.

With Kong making more money than RKO could have ever imagined, it was natural that a sequel should follow. Son of Kong was rushed into production in late 1933 and was hastily made by the same team on a much smaller budget. Instead of a ferocious ape, Son of Kong contained a cute little white gorilla that was used more for comedy relief than menace. The result however, remains a thoroughly watchable and enjoyable film. The indefatigable Carl Denham, again played by Robert Armstrong, returns to Skull Island in search of treasure. There he discovers the offspring of Kong. The film, like its predecessor, is full of action and O'Brien managed to refine many of the techniques that he had pioneered in Kong. Today it is almost a lost film and is usually overlooked by fans of the original.

During the final months of shooting Son of Kong, personal tragedy struck O'Brien. His wife, who was suffering from TB and cancer, shot and killed her two sons and then shot herself. She was rushed to hospital where it was found that the gunshot wound she had inflicted on herself had actually punctured her lung and drained it, thereby prolonging her life. Considered too ill to be tried, she remained in hospital. O'Brien refused to visit her. Several months later O'Brien began seeing a young woman and following the death of his wife, they were married.

Following the success of Kong, Merian Cooper was named head of RKO produc-

tion. During a honeymoon visit to Italy, he became enamoured of the ruins of Pompeii and on his return to work began production on Last Days of Pompeii, a spectacle of DeMille proportions. He enlisted O'Brien as his chief special effects technician. Although O'Brien didn't contribute any stop motion to the film, he created many spectacular miniature explosions as the city is engulfed by the molten lava.

O'Brien's next special effects work was on a long forgotten musical, Dancing Pirate for Pioneer Pictures. For this he created several glass paintings of pirate ships and it marked the first time he worked with the Technicolor process.

In 1938 the highly imaginative Cooper submitted a script to MGM called *War Eagles*. It was to be an epic mythical adventure that mixed Viking warriors with prehistoric monsters and culminated in a battle with Vikings riding giant eagles in a pitched battle with pterodactyls. Several other script ideas were brought in, one of which featured the eagles doing battle with a fleet of planes over New York City. However, the beginning of World War Two brought the production to a swift end although a ten minute test reel survives.

In 1941, O'Brien turned his hand to a story by Harold Lamb, called *Gwangi* — a story of a lost valley populated by dinosaurs and discovered by a band of cowboys from a wild west show. Pre-production work was commenced but halted after a short time. The film was finally made in 1967 by O'Brien's protege, Ray Harryhausen, as *The Valley of Gwangi* (see Starburst 27). Despite the fact that many of the sequences were used from O'Brien's original concepts, he received no screen credit.

After a stint in the Army Air Corps during the war, Cooper reteamed with his old partner, Schoedsack, to film *Mr Joseph Young of Africa*, another giant ape story. Once again, the producers brought in the Kongmaker. O'Brien enlisted the aid of Marcel Delgado and also hired a young animator, Ray Harry-

hausen, who had made several short films using the techniques he had studied through innumerable viewings of King Kong. Harryhausen had often shown O'Brien samples of his work and had impressed the master enough to convince him that he was ready to work on a large scale animation feature. As it developed, Harryhausen animated about 80% of the film with O'Brien working in a supervisory capacity only. Delgado built the complicated armatures required for the film. The film reminds one of Son of Kong with Joe Young being used for mostly comic scenes. As with Son of Kong, the film has paled into comparative insignificance next to King Kong, but the animation is the best of any that O'Brien was involved with. Although it lacks the pure driving force of Kong, *Mighty Joe Young*, the film's final release title, has many scenes of complicated stop motion work. It won for O'Brien a well-deserved Oscar, the award he should have won for Kong. A planned sequel in which the twelve foot high ape was to meet Tarzan, was cancelled when it was discovered that *Mighty Joe Young* was slow to recoup its one million dollars plus budget.

O'Brien then tried to interest the studios in a story that he had written with his wife called *The Valley of the Mist*, another lost world opus which featured a Mexican boy and his pet bull. The film was to climax with the bull battling an allosaurus. Producer Jesse Lasky made extensive preparations for the film but finally sold the rights to Edward and William Nassour. The title was changed to *Ring Around Saturn* and the script was rewritten. However, the project was finally shelved.

Meanwhile, Cooper was busy developing his three screen Cinerama process for a documentary pot-pourri called *This is Cinerama*. Cooper hired O'Brien to work on the project and also to investigate the possibilities of remaking King Kong in the new process. Like a previous Cooper-O'Brien project of 1950, a filming of Wells' *Food of the Gods*, the idea lay dormant. It would remain for Dino Di Laurentis to remake the mighty ape's adventures in the much discussed 1976 feature.

*The Beast of Hollow Mountain* was a script that Willis O'Brien submitted to the Nassour brothers who had bought the option on *Valley of the Mist*. *Hollow Mountain* was another variation on the lost world theme and O'Brien worked in several elements from the unfilmed *Gwangi*, mixing cowboys and monsters. The Nassours bought the script but despite the assurance that O'Brien would handle the effects, the film went ahead without the animator and O'Brien found himself barred from the studio lot. The result, released in 1956, was a shoddy film with the dinosaur making an appearance in the film's closing moments only.





Warners Brothers next approached O'Brien to design the effects for their documentary, *The Animal World*, in 1956. Although he designed the model dinosaurs, the bulk of the film's animation work was carried out by Ray Harryhausen. O'Brien was then hired by Warners to work on the effects for *The Black Scorpion*, a film that once again used the popular lost world theme. To cut costs the movie was shot in Mexico. However, the makers, having completed the live-action footage, found conditions so poverty-stricken in the small Mexican studio that they had to return to California, where the animation footage was completed in the garage of Pete Peterson, one of O'Brien's assistants.

A murky British production, *Behemoth the Sea Monster*, was the next film to feature the work of Willis O'Brien. Made on a poverty row budget, the film is almost unwatchable today. O'Brien didn't have enough money to finish the effects, which were completed in the United States, while the live-action was shot in England. To cover gaps left by the minute budget, the producers used several scenes over and over again.

When O'Brien was contracted by Irwin Allen to work on a big budget colour remake of *The Lost World* in 1960, he was very excited by the prospect. However, he soon found that he had been hired merely for the prestige of his name and for his connection with the 1925 original. The resultant film was a disaster by any standards, using phoney sound-stage sets lacking in atmosphere and photographically enlarged lizards to play the denizens of Doyle's *Lost World*.

At the age of 76, Willis O'Brien was tired of the way the film industry had been treating him, although he was still keen to see a major production use his unique talents in a creative way. He had seen a story idea of his, *King Kong vs The Prometheus*, turned into a Toho travesty called *King Kong vs Godzilla* and had seen his suggestions ignored on the set of Allen's *Lost World*.

It was during the filming of *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, on which he was animating the final scenes with the fire truck and ladder, that he was struck down with a massive heart attack.

Willis O'Brien died on November 8, 1962.



# MISSED ANY GOOD MAGAZINES LATELY?



There is only one way to guarantee that you never miss an issue of Britain's premiere fantasy magazine, *Starburst*. **SUBSCRIBE!** Think of it, every issue delivered to your own front door, courtesy of your friendly neighbourhood postman. It's an offer you can't refuse!

Complete the coupon and send, with full payment to:  
**MARVEL MAIL ORDER SERVICES,**  
 19f Spital Road,  
 Maldon, Essex.

☐ 6 issues £5.50    ☐ 12 issues £9.50

The subscription rates given include postage and packing for all countries in Europe, the United Kingdom and Eire, by surface mail. Overseas customers please remit payments in pounds sterling made payable to MARVEL COMICS MAIL ORDER SERVICES.

If you don't want to cut this magazine, send details on a separate piece of paper.

Name .....

Address .....

Age .....

Signed..... Amount enclosed.....

If under sixteen coupon must be signed by parent or guardian.

## STARBURST NOW COVERS A WIDER RANGE OF FANTASY THAN EVER BEFORE

### No other magazine offers you...

- \* Up-to-minute news on all the latest happenings in the worlds of tv and cinema fantasy.
- \* Exclusive interviews with the stars, directors, producers and technicians of all your favourite fantasy movies and tv shows.
- \* Critical reviews of the current science fiction, horror and fantasy offerings.
- \* Informed and informative retrospective features on the great fantasy classics of yesteryear.

## PLUS...

- \* Regular columns devoted to news and reviews of fantasy in films, books, records and television.

## COMPLETE COVERAGE OF FANTASY IN THE MEDIA IN ONE MAGAZINE!